MADAME X

In a Prologue and Three Acts

Adapted from the French of Alexandre Bisson

by

JOHN N. RAPHAEL.

Produced at the Globe Theatre, London, 1 Sept., 1909

DICKENS'S TYPE-WRITING OFFICE
4 TAVISTOCK STREET,
COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

Writing Materials (T.R.)

Cigarette Box and Cigarettes (T.R.)

Matches "

Photo in frame "

Ash Tray "

Briefs (on Table at back) "

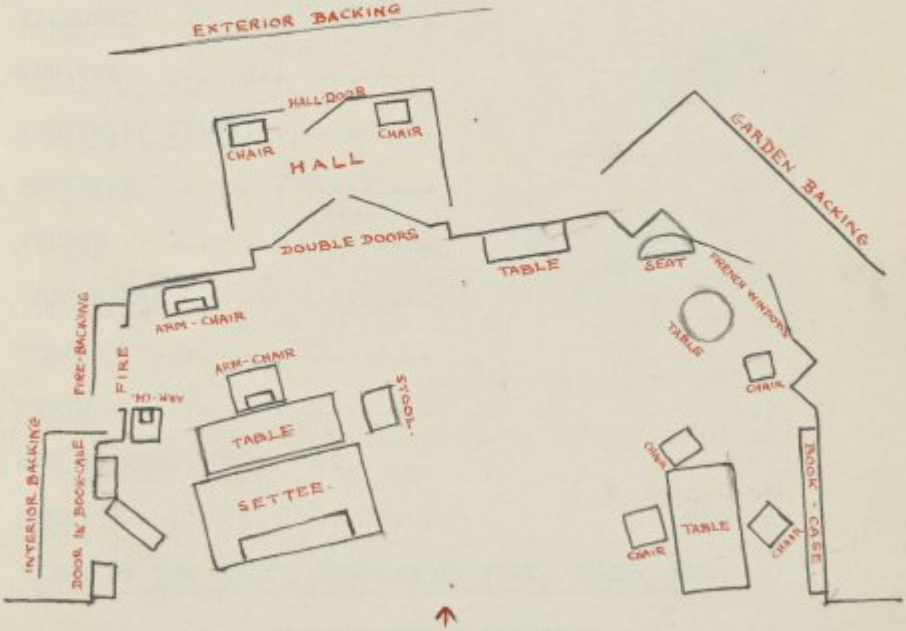
6 Letters (On Table at back) "

Log Box and Logs.

Ornaments etc on Bookcase P.S.

Brief (Floriot)

"MADAME X" PROLOGUE.



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CHARACTERS

FLORIOT ... ...

NOEL ... ...

PERISSARD ... ...

LAROQUE ... ...

Dr CHENNEL .. ..

VALMORIN ... ...

MERIVEL ... ...

PRESIDING JUDGE... ... ...

FONTAINE ... ...

VICTOR ... ...

JACQUELINE ... ...

HELENE ... ...

MARIE ... ...

MME VARENNE.. ... ...

ROSE ... ...

CLERK OF THE COURT, FOREMAN OF JURY, USHER, ETC.

SCENE:- The Prologue takes place in Passy, in a suburb of Paris. The other acts take place in Bordeaux.

THEATRE

P R O L O G U E

(At rise of Curtain Bell.

(SCENE:- FLORIOT'S house in Passy. The stage shows a large library on the ground floor. It is the room of a hard working lawyer; law books in the book-cases, papers and briefs on the writing table etc. etc.)

(As the CURTAIN rises, ROSE, Floriot's house-keeper ENTERS at L. goes up to doors R.C. at back admits MME VARENNE)

MME V — Well, Rose, what's the news? How is our little Patient?

ROSE — Couldn't be better, ma'am.

MME V — At last! My brother has been very worried. Have you seen him this morning? (comes to sofa R.C. sits)

ROSE — (Coming down C.) Yes. The doctor came this morning and he is coming back again presently, before luncheon. But, thank Heaven, the dear child is out of danger.

MME V — There is no more fever?

ROSE — None whatever.

MME V — And what does M. Floriot say?

ROSE — Oh, if you had only seen him! He did not know what he was doing; he was beside himself with joy. He kissed me, hugged the doctor, he laughed and cried.

(They both laugh)

MME V — He is so fond of his son.

ROSE — The boy is all he has. He has been fourteen nights by his bedside, and he's been to Court as usual every day. There's no doubt of it, Mm. Flœriot can work. (Goes up to Table C. at back gets letters put them on T.R.C.)

MME V — And he is so kind hearted.

ROSE — Yes. Though he is not always easy to get on with.

MME V — I'm not surprised at that, considering the lonely life he leads.

ROSE — (Crosses to Table L.C. putting chairs straight and comes round it to C.) That's no reason for being bad-tempered. You are a widow,ma'am, and widowhood doesn't make you unhappy.

MME V — On the contrary. How long has he been a widower?

ROSE — About two years. (goes to windows L. closes them)

MME V — (Moves up to L. end of sofa) Before he came to Passy?

ROSE — Yes, just before.

MME V — And he was very fond of his wife?

ROSE — He worshipped her.

MME V — She was a pretty woman, wasn't she? (Door bang off R.C. at back.)

ROSE — (Coming down C.) Charming and pretty too. Full of life and -----

(ENTER FLORIOT EU R.C. at back who goes up to MME VARENNE and shakes hands MME V rises - ROSE drops a little L.C.)

FLORIOT — How kind of you to come, Madame Varenne.

MME V — I am delighted at the news Rose has just given me.(Goes up to fire)

FLORIOT — Yes, our nightmare is over (returning to L.C.) It was time it finished, for I don't think that I could have held out much longer.

ROSE — Well, we shall all be able to rest now. (helping FLORIOT EU off with his coat)

FLORIOT — I am sure I hope so. Has Mr.Noel come?

ROSE — No. Nobody has been at all, sir.

MME V — So Raymond is really out of danger?

FLORIOT — Yes, but he is so weak, so pale and so thin.

ROSE — Oh, children put on flesh again as fast as they lose it. He will be plump and rosy and running about again in no time. I will go to him now, if I may, sir. (Goes up C and round to door at L. EXITS)

FLORIOT — Yes, and let me know as soon as he wakes. (Gets documents from T at back, brings them to T. at R.C.)

MME V — (Coming back to sofa and sits - to Floriot) You have had a bad time of it?

FLORIOT — Yes, it has not been easy. And I shall never be able to thank your brother enough for what he has done.

MME V — He has thought of little else but the boy for weeks and he was always talking to me about him. The day before yesterday he went to see one of his old professors to consult him on the treatment and he was hard at work that night experimenting and reading.

FLORIOT — He tells me that it was that night he got the idea which has saved Raymond's life. I owe my son's life to your brother, Madame Varenne, and I shall never forget it.

MME V — What he has done has brought its own reward. My brother is so fond of Raymond.

FLORIOT — (smiling) And you?

MME V — Oh, I love the child.

FLORIOT — He loves you, too. You were the first person he asked for when the fever left him.

MME V — Dear little fellow! Well...(Rising - she gives him her hand as if she were going.)

FLORIOT — No, don't go.

(She sits)

He has just fallen asleep and they will tell me when he wakes. (He comes round L. of T. and sits L. end of sofa) As we are alone, for a moment, I want to take the opportunity of thanking you from the bottom of my heart.

MME V — Thanking me? For what?

FLORIOT — For your friendship.

MME V — (laughing) How absurd you are. If you thank me I ought to be making pretty speeches to thank you for yours as well.

FLORIOT — It is not quite the same thing.

MME V — Why?

FLORIOT — Because you are a charming woman, happy, amiable, and altogether delightful, and I - well, I am just a bear.

MME V — You don't mean to say so?

FLORIOT — Oh yes, bear is the only word which describes me, and an ill tempered bear at that.

MME V — You will never be as disagreeable as my poor husband was.

FLORIOT — Really, was he as dull as I am?

MME V — My husband! Good gracious me! You are a bright, merry boy compared to him.

(BELL)

FLORIOT — (laughing) You can't have had a wildly giddy time, then?

MME V — I didn't. But now everything and everybody appear charming by contrast.

FLORIOT — Even I?

MME V — (Smiling) Yes, even you.

(ENTER ROSE R.I.E. going up R. of T.)

FLORIOT — (to ROSE) Has Mr.Noel come?

ROSE — No, it's Dr.Chennel (opens double doors)

(ENTER DR CHENNEL. FLORIOT goes up C. ROSE EXITS)

DR C — (To MME V) Hallo, May, are you there? (Shaking hands with Floriot) Well, how's the son and heir?

FLORIOT — Asleep.

DR C — That shows he's a sensible chap. Sleep is the very best thing for him.

MME V — You have turned up just in time. Mr.Floriot was making me blush.

DR C — Eh - really.

MME V — Yes, Mr.Deputy Attorney was so full of thanks that he would not let me get a word in edgeways.

DR C — Thanks?

MME V — Thanks for the valuable friendship which we have showered upon him.

DR C — Mr. Deputy Attorney is too kind.

FLORIOT — (laughing pushing Dr. Ch. on to stool at C.) Chaff me as much as you like, you won't prevent me from saying what I think. (Goes to chair R. of table L.C.) When I came to Passy, both you and your sister took me up at once and made a friend of me although you did not know me at all.

DR C — (laughing) Perhaps that was the reason.

FLORIOT — I was all alone, rather at sea, hopeless and to some extent helpless and I shall never be able to tell you what your kindness and your friendship meant to me.

DR C — My dear fellow, we could not help becoming friends at once. You and I hit it off directly and my sister fell in love with your boy.

MME V — The very first time I saw him.

DR C — There you are, you see. Besides, how do you know that we are not, both of us, sowing that we may reap. One never knows how useful a friend in your profession and position may turn out.

(MME V: laughs)

FLORIOT — Don't be absurd.

MME V — (Rising) Well, as Raymond is asleep, I will come back and see him after luncheon (shakes hands with Floriot who goes up C. and rings the bell - ROSE appears - MME V going up C) (To DR C.) Are you coming?

DR C — No I want to talk to Floriot (He rises comes front of sofa to fire at R.)

MME V — Good-bye, then.

(FLORIOT EU takes her to the door. As he returns -)

DR C — And now, Floriot EU, as the boy is out of danger, you must begin taking care of yourself.

FLORIOT — (Coming to chair above T. at R.C.) There's nothing the matter with me.

DR C — Oh yes there is, and a good deal more than you think.

FLORIOT — Nonsense, I am a little tired but a few days rest -

DR C — (Coming to R. end of T. at R.C.) No, no, no, you are working too much and you are taking too little exercise; you brood, and you worry over things. You must let me prescribe a treatment.

FLORIOT — What sort of treatment.

DR C — Forcible. Every morning, no matter what the weather is, you must take a brisk two hours' walk.

FLORIOT — But, my dear fellow -

DR C — You must walk at a smart pace for two hours and you must feed heartily.

FLORIOT — My dear fellow, I can hardly get through a cutlet for my lunch.

DR C — I will let you off to-day, but from to-morrow onwards you must eat two (coming up R.)

FLORIOT — I shall never be able to do it.

DR C — (Over EU Floriot) Oh yes, you will. On your way home to dinner every evening, you must look in at the fencing school, fence for half an hour, take a douche and walk home. (coming round to C.)

FLORIOT — Walk - out to Passy?

DR C — Yes, out to Passy.

FLORIOT — My dear doctor, I cannot follow your prescription. I haven't got the time.

DR C — Then you must get married.

FLORIOT — Married?

DR C — There is nothing to be startled at; you've been married before and it won't hurt you to be married again. A lonely life is not the life for you. Look out for a happy minded woman, who will keep you young and be a mother to your child, and marry her. I've an idea you won't have much difficulty in finding such a woman! (looking at sofa where MME V had sat)

FLORIOT — (Up goes to Fire R.- much moved) Chennel I see now that I ought to have told you before what I must tell you now. I am not a widower.

DR C — Not a -

FLORIOT — No, my wife is living.

DR C — Living? (goes to sofa at R.C. sits)

FLORIOT — After three years of married life, she left me, with her lover. I came home unexpectedly one day and found them together. They rushed out of the house in an agony of terror, if they had not I think I should have killed them both. (Coming above table to C.)

DR C — Sh! Sh! my dear Fl EU riot

FLORIOT — I have often wanted to tell you, but somehow I could not talk of it. (Comes to Dr C.) Chennel you can't guess how miserably unhappy I am.

DR C — You love her still?

FLORIOT — I can think of no other woman. She was my life itself.

DR C — Floriot.

FLORIOT — (Sits L. arm of sofa) I cannot tell you how I suffered. I would not have believed such suffering was possible. I would have killed myself if I had dared. But I thought of the child and that saved me. I remembered my duty to the boy and the thought of him kept me alive. If I had lost him - (Rises)

DR C — He will be running about in a week.

FLORIOT — Thanks to you, doctor. You have saved both our lives. (Goes to R. R.C.)

(ENTER ROSE R.I.E.)

ROSE — Master Raymond has just woke up, sir. (FL EU RIOT comes above table to her.)

DR C — How is he?

ROSE — He's much better, Monsieur!

FLORIOT — Let's go to him.

(As they go out ROSE holds door then goes to Fire R and is putting on logs)

ROSE — Dear little chap! When he opened his big eyes and saw me, he knew me for the first time since -

(BELL rings. ROSE wipes her eyes and goes to open the door, coming back again presently with JACQUELINE ROSE keeps R of doors JACQ: comes C. ROSE kisses her hand.)

Whatever will he say?

JACQUE — Raymond, my child! Is it true that my boy - that Raymond has been ill?

ROSE — For over a fortnight, ma'am.

JACQUE — I only heard of it yesterday, and then by chance. Rose, I must see him. (coming front of sofa)

ROSE — Mr. Floriot is with him ma'am. (coming down R. to door R.I. E.)

JACQUE — Ah!(with a stifled sob)

ROSE — Poor little fellow, we never thought he would get over it.

JACQUE: — Oh! (Sinks on to sofa.)

ROSE — But the danger is past now; the doctor says he will soon be perfectly well again.

JACQUE — My Raymond, my boy! (picking up a photograph) How he has grown! How big and strong he looks!

ROSE — He does not look strong now, ma'am.

JACQUE — To think that he might have died and that I should never have seen him again. My darling, my boy (she kisses the photograph) I wonder whether he will recognise me. Does he remember me at all?

ROSE — Here's Mm.Floriot.

(JACQUELINE puts the photograph down and rises to her feet)

Oh, I beg pardon! I must have made a mistake I thought I heard him coming.

JACQUE — (Going towards T. at L.C.) What will he say to me? But I don't care if he will only let me stay here with my boy. If he refuses to see me, I don't know what will happen to me. Rose I - I am afraid.

ROSE — (Coming a little towards JACQ) Would it not be better to write to Mm.Floriot,ma'am? He does not expect you, and you know how quick-tempered he can be.

JACQUE — I have written to him. I have written him three letters in the past three weeks, and he has not answered them.

ROSE — He didn't open them.

JACQUE — I must see him, I will see him (sits chair L.C.) He cannot he must not condemn me unheard. Does he ever speak of me?

ROSE Never, ma'am.

JACQUE Never?

ROSE No.

JACQUE What did he say, what did he do when I - went?

ROSE (a step towards JACQ) He was like a madman. He shut himself up in his room for days together and wouldn't see anybody. I used to listen outside his door, and hear him sobbing aloud and talking to himself. It frightened me so, that in spite of his orders, I went into his room one evening. He was sitting by the fire burning your letters and photographs and the tears were rolling down his cheeks.

JACQUE (her face in her hands - to herself) Ah, if only I had known, if only I had known!

ROSE The boy saved him from going mad, I think, he never let him out of his sight day or night. Gradually he calmed down a little, and seemed to settle down. He worked a little harder than before, that is all. Then we moved and came here.(Goes up to T. in window up L. turns)

JACQUE I must see him.

ROSE But Madame -

JACQUE Rose, go and tell him that a lady wants to speak to him, but do not let him guess who it is.

ROSE Yes, but -

JACQUE Rose, I beg of you. (ROSE goes out R.I.E.)

(JACQUE left alone goes to sofa at R.C, sits, takes up Raymond's photo again and kisses it.)

JACQUE — Oh my darling, my boy! if it were not for you I -

(ENTER FLORIOT R.I.E. coming towards JACQ: stops short)

FLORIOT — You! (He is wishful to strangle her but restrains himself with difficulty - goes up to double doors and flings them open) (Angrily) Leave the house.

JACQUE — (Over the sofa) Louis!

FLORIOT — (furiously) Leave the house.

JACQUE — Listen, Louis.

FLORIOT — Go!

JACQUE — Yes, yes, I will go. I promise you that I will go, but listen.

FLORIOT — (Shuts doors and comes down C. - with an effort remains calm. After a moment's silence) Well? What do you want?

JACQUE — (Leaning over L. end of sofa) Forgiveness!

FLORIOT — Ah!

JACQUE — Forgive me, forget!

FLORIOT — (turns to her) Forget! How can I forget? For the last two years I have been living with a memory which is eating my soul out, the memory of you in another man's arms (clenching his fists, then goes to above T. at R.C.) And you ask me to forget.

JACQUE — Louis, Louis! In our child's name -

FLORIOT — I forbid you to mention the child. You have no right to him; he is mine, mine only.

JACQ — Ah!

FLORIOT — Did you think of him when you left us? And if you did, why did you leave him?

JACQUE — I was mad.

FLORIOT — (Coming down C. to JACQ - with bitter irony) Mad? That is the kind of answer I expected "I was false to my husband. I deserted my child - I was mad. I stole out of the house like a thief and carried all its happiness away with me - I was mad. I went away to live a life of pleasure, or what I thought was pleasure - I was mad." The excuse is an easy one. (goes up C.)

JACQUE — And yet it is the truth.

FLORIOT — (coming to Jacq) No, it is not the truth. You were tired of me and loved the other man, that is the truth. You were not mad; you may as well confess it now. (Hotly) Confess it! You loved him, you loved him!

JACQUE — He said he would kill himself at my feet if I -

FLORIOT — (going towards T. at L.C.) Ha, ha, and you believed him. You never gave a thought to me although I worshipped you and you said you loved me -

JACQUE — And it was true, Louis.

FLORIOT — (Scornfully) True! (He seizes chair R. of T. at L.C. and sits)

JACQUE: Yes, it was true. We never understood each other (she half rises) that is all. You loved me as you knew how to love. with the love of a [redacted] master for a slave; but you never let me be your friend, you were never gentle with me, you never took me into your life, you never really knew my heart, and, with you, I always felt alone, always alone. (Rises, goes a little towards [redacted]) Although I loved you, I was always afraid of you. You were so serious so severe, and I needed gaiety, laughter and joy. You never thought of that, never noticed that I was unhappy. You had your work, your ambition, your friends, I had nothing, nothing. And I was so young, twenty, hardly twenty. Louis, do forgive me. Try oh do try. I am truly repentant. Oh do - do try - (she falls on her knees.)

FLORIOT (Rising) No.

JACQUE Louis!

FLORIOT Go!

JACQUE Ah, why did I ever go away? You would have killed me then - at once, and that would have been the end. Louis, forgive me.

FLORIOT (weakening) No, no! Surely you must understand that I - Go. (He goes up L.)

JACQUE (Over Ch. L.C.) What will become of me!

FLORIOT (Goes to windows up L. flings them open) Go back to the other man who said he would have killed himself for you!

JACQUE (in a whisper) He is dead.

FLORIOT Dead! (He flings chair aside and coming towards JACQ) So that is why you have come back.

JACQUE — No, no. (shrinking back)

FLORIOT — Oh, now I understand!

JACQUE — I came to see Raymond.

FLORIOT — And I was on the point of yielding. What a fool I was! I actually believed in your repentance.

JACQUE — I should not have dared to come back, if ....

FLORIOT — So he is dead, is he?

JACQUE — I wrote and told you so.

FLORIOT — And now that he is dead, of course you come to me again,

JACQUE — No. No!!!

FLORIOT — To me, your idiot of a husband, who you think in his weakness will be only too glad to take you back again.

JACQUE — (pleading) Not in his weakness, Louis, but out of his generosity. I cannot live without you, Louis, or without our child. Cannot you see that I have changed? I have been so unhappy.

FLORIOT — Unhappy. (goes L.C.)

JACQUE — (rising - desperately) Louis, cannot you see that I am speaking the truth? Do let me see our child again.

FLORIOT — He has forgotten you.

JACQUE Let me kiss him just once.

FLORIOT He believes you to be dead.

JACQUE Oh, no, no!

FLORIOT He believes you to be dead!

JACQUE Do not say that. It can't be true.

(FLORIOT EU goes up to double doors)

It is too horrible. Louis, you used to love me. Remember that. You used to love me - I am your wife, the mother of your son.

FLORIOT You have gone out of my life and of his.

JACQUE Oh, my God, Louis, forgive me, and a life of repentance shall -

FLORIOT (Throws open doors, then goes to Table at R.C.) Go!

JACQUE Don't take my child from me! (coming towards Table at R.C.)

FLORIOT. Go!

JACQUE Oh, let me see him. I will not speak to him if you for bid it. But let me see him once and kiss him, and -

FLORIOT (shaking his head) Leave my house!

JACQUE Louis! pity! Oh, my child, my child! (She kneels - clasp-

ing his hand - he throws her hand from his)

(Door slam)

(She rises slowly - dazed - mechanically takes her furs from sofa and goes slowly through double doors and street door. At the slam of the door FLORIOT turns calls JACQUELINE goes up to street door and realising that she is gone comes slowly back to his table and sinks into armchair.)

(ENTER DR CHENNEL R.I.E. closes door and comes to R. of FLORIOT)

DR C — He is going on splendidly, and he is hungry, which is the best sign in the world. I have left orders with -

(FLORIOT picks up a pen)

Why, what's the matter with you now? You're looking very ill!

FLORIOT — (dropping pen) Doctor, I have just gone through the most awful moments of my life. My wife has been here.

DR C — Your wife.

FLORIOT — Yes, she has just gone. I - I was afraid that I should kill her.

DR C — (Taking him round the shoulders) Come, come!

FLORIOT — Doctor, in those few minutes, I have lived through the whole past again, with all its joys and all its miseries, with all my love and all my - (He breaks down)

DR C — You must not give way, Floriot. (BELL)

FLORIOT — No, you are right. And do you know why she came back. Because her lover is dead! Because she -

(ROSE ENTERING R.C. at back)

ROSE — Mr. Noel has come, sir.

FLORIOT — (Rising) Show him in here. (To Dr.Chennel) Noel is an old and very dear friend whom I thought to be dead until this morning, he and I - (comes L.C.)

(ENTER NOEL R.C. at back EXIT ROSE)

NOEL — (Brightly) Well, here I am and very much alive as you can see.

FLORIOT — My dear old Noel. This is my friend, Dr.Chennel. Shake hands with him, old chap. He has just saved my boy's life.

NOEL — (Shakes hands with Dr. C. then puts his arm round FLOR) Then I am more than glad to shake you by the hand, Doctor, for everything that touched Floriot comes very near to me.

FLORIOT — (to NOEL) You look in very sound health for a dead man.

NOEL — So you heard of my accident?

FLORIOT — Everybody heard of it. The papers were full of your disappearance for a week. (goes up C. a little.)

NOEL — Quite a long time for Paris to take an interest in anybody?

CHENNEL — Well, I must be going. I shall be back at five, and you two evidently have a good deal to tell one another. (To NOEL) Good-bye, sir.

NOEL (shakes hands with him) Doctor, delighted to have met you.

(FLORIOT goes up R. to D. doors opens them)

FLORIOT Till five o'clock then.

DR C Good-bye till five.

(EXIT DR. NOEL takes a cigarette from his case goes below sofa to R. end of Table - FLORIOT comes back to above Table at R.C. lighting match)

NOEL (To Floriot) Now, let me have a look at you, Louis, old man. Life has not been much kinder to you than to me, to judge by your appearance.

FLORIOT Finding me looking old, do you?

NOEL No - not old for your age. How old are you, forty?

FLORIOT Thirty-five.

NOEL Well, nobody would say that you were more than forty-two.

FLORIOT (smiling) Thank you. (goes to Fire.)

NOEL I do not mince matters, as you see.

FLORIOT Five whole years since I saw you last.

NOEL (comes front of sofa and sits L.end.) And five weeks' separation used to seem a century.

FLORIOT You will lunch with me of course.

NOEL Of course I will

FLORIOT An early lunch though, I have to be in Court at one.

NOEL Ah, of course. You are Deputy Attorney now.

FLORIOT Yes, I got my promotion eighteen months ago.

NOEL I always knew you'd get on.

FLORIOT (sighing) I have not much to worry about there (coming down to R. of sofa sits) But I want to hear about you, old man. What happened to you? Why did you disappear in that mysterious fashion? Who was she?

(NOEL remains silent knocks ash of cigarette in tray)

Of course it was a woman. For some time before you went away I had noticed a change in you.

NOEL Ah! you had, had you?

FLORIOT Yes. You were not as bright and jolly and full of life as you had been, and you used to stop away from me for days together, so I knew there was a woman in the case. You loved her?

NOEL Deeply.

FLORIOT And she was false to you?

NOEL She never even knew I loved her.

FLORIOT Did you never tell her?

NOEL No.

FLORIOT Why not? Who was she?

NOEL (looks at Floriot) She loved another man. When I heard of her coming marriage I could not face it and - I went away.

FLORIOT Poor Noel.

NOEL Oh it was all my own fault. I took myself seriously. That was my one mistake. I might have known that no woman could ever care for me. I was the fool of the family at home. I was the butt of all the other boys at school. And I should have known that the woman I loved would fall to the lot of a better man. But I didn't know - until too late - And so I went away.

FLORIOT But why didn't you write to me?

NOEL I wanted to forget and be forgotten, old chap. The papers had reported me lost in a snowstorm in the Pyrenees and I laid hold of the opportunity.

FLORIOT But you were badly hurt?

NOEL Not very badly, and I soon got well, and having nothing on earth to live for, I prospered absurdly and made money.

FLORIOT Are you married?

NOEL No, I shall never marry.

FLORIOT So you love her still, do you?

NOEL I want no other woman in my life. (Throws cigarette away and then comes L.C. turns to Floriot) Besides I am much too old to think of marriage now. Let's talk about you. And how is Jacqueline (FLORIOT goes slowly round R. to fire - NOEL looking round the room) Little Jenny Wren, as we used to call her. How pretty she used to be, and what fun. I suppose she is quieter now that she's married to a solemn old thing like you. Why, Louis, my dear old chap, what's the matter? (coming towards Table at R.C.)

FLORIOT (Coming to Table at R.C.) Nothing, nothing, don't worry My child has been at death's door for the last few days, and I thought I had lost him. My nerves are just a little out of joint, that's all.

NOEL But the boy is all right now?

FLORIOT Yes, Raymond's out of danger.

NOEL And how old is this Master Raymond of yours? (sits stool R.C.)

FLORIOT Four.

NOEL Quite a man. Is he your only child?

FLORIOT Yes, my only child.

NOEL I must see him, of course.

FLORIOT After lunch if you will. He is asleep again now.

NOEL Don't tell your wife I am here. I want to see her face when she comes in and sees me. She'll be so surprised, and will -

FLORIOT You won't see her.

NOEL Oh! she's away?

FLORIOT Yes, she has gone.

NOEL Gone?

FLORIOT She left me two years ago with another man.

(A Pause. NOEL rises puts his hand on Floriot's shoulder and goes to mantelpiece R.)

NOEL Poor girl, poor girl!

FLORIOT You pity her?

NOEL Is she not to be pitied?

FLORIOT Then what about me, who adored her, and whose life she wrecked? I am an old man at thirty-five

(NOEL comes down a little)

You said so yourself just now. Now you know why.

NOEL (arm round Floriot) Poor old Louis.

FLORIOT [redacted], you can never imagine what a hell these last two years have been (Hits the table - rises and comes C.)

NOEL (Sits R. end of sofa - leaning over Table at R.C.) Poor little Jenny Wren! She was not wicked. She was only frivolous and thirsted for luxury and pleasure. Life was too serious for her. And you never suspected anything?

FLORIOT No, I loved her and believed in her.

NOEL (Rises - comes in front of sofa to R. of Floriot) Well you have your son still, and who knows, one day perhaps, she will repent of the harm she has done you, and you will see her again.

FLORIOT I have seen her again.

NOEL She came back to you then?

FLORIOT Less than half an hour ago.

NOEL She came back? For what?

FLORIOT (Bitterly) Oh, not for much. Merely for my forgiveness and to ask me to take her back. (Goes to chair at L.C. sits)

NOEL And what did you say?

FLORIOT I told her to go.

NOEL (Coming to R. of Floriot) You turned her out?

FLORIOT Yes.

NOEL You were wrong, Floriot. You let your very natural anger get the better of you, but to-morrow you will regret what you have done.

FLORIOT (Away from NOEL) No.

NOEL (Comes round to chair L. of Floriot and sits) I don't say that she is guiltless towards you, but, Floriot, she has repented.

FLORIOT (Bitterly) Really!

NOEL Yes, or why should she come back?

FLORIOT She shall never enter my house again.

NOEL She is your wife.

FLORIOT I will not have her near my child.

NOEL He is her child too.(PAUSE) And you have dared to keep these two apart. Instead of holding out a helping hand to her, you have told her to go. You might have saved her from her future; you have pushed her the first step down the hill which leads, God alone can know whither. Floriot, my dear fellow, you are wrong. For mind you, you are responsible and you cannot shirk your responsibility.

FLORIOT I - Responsible - for her?

NOEL Yes, you are responsible. Who knows what that poor creature may not do, now that your pride has turned her off without a hearing.

FLORIOT I acted within my rights.

NOEL Your rights? (Turns to Floriot)

FLORIOT Yes.

(WARNING)

NOEL You have no right, and no one can confer the right on you, to sentence that poor creature to the life to which you have

sentenced her. Your own conscience must be curiously clear if you can dare to be so cruel to another. Your rights! (Rises going C. then turns L.C.) and what about your duties, pray? Jacqueline was young and thoughtless! Did you guide and guard her? Did you study her and her heart's longings? You expected her to make you happy. Did you think of her happiness? Did you remember that you are far older than she? Did you try to understand her youth and all its needs? (A slight pause - FLORIOT moves) You do not answer, Floriot. And now because she sinned, because she wounded your vanity, by preferring - I do not defend the preference - by preferring another man to you, you close your door against her and say go! How can you tell me that you loved her? (Goes R. to R end of sofa sits.)

FLORIOT — God knows I loved her.

NOEL — That is not true, Floriot.

FLORIOT — Noel.

NOEL — It is not true. I say you did not love her.

FLORIOT — What?

NOEL — No, ~~I know~~ you did not love Jacqueline.

(They rise, facing each other)

You were in love with her grace and with her beauty; her charm enveloped you, but Floriot, it did not blind you to her weaknesses. If you had really loved her, she could have done no wrong to you, for even when she sinned, you would have found palliation for her sinning.

FLORIOT — (Goes up to chair at R.C.) No, no. Noel! Everybody would have acted as I did under the same circumstances. What would you have done yourself?

NOEL (Crosses to L.C.) I do not know exactly, what I should have done, because I am a man with a man's limitations. But I know what you ought to do.

FLORIOT I can never forgive her.

NOEL (crosses to stool R.C. sits) When you plead against a criminal, you ask for a verdict and a sentence in proportion to the crime committed. Your unfortunate wife loved you and gave you a son. She sinned against you and is sorry for her sin, yet you have sentenced her to misery, despair and death.

FLORIOT No, no.

NOEL Yes, yes. What will she do? What will become of her? Homeless - without means -

(FLORIOT sits)

Have you ever thought of that? You have not, I can see it on your face. And I suppose you consider yourself an honourable man, a model husband and a blameless father? If you won't do your duty, Floriot, I will do it for you.(Rises)

FLORIOT What do you mean?

NOEL Your wife shall find in my house the place which you refuse her in her own. My life shall be hers, and I will ask her for nothing in exchange.

(FLORIOT rises)

FLORIOT (much moved) Noel, tell me the truth, Jacqueline was the woman whom you loved, was she not?

NOEL Yes, it was Jacqueline. I could not try to rob you of her love, for we two were like brothers - more than brothers.

FLORIOT (sinking into his chair) What am I to do?

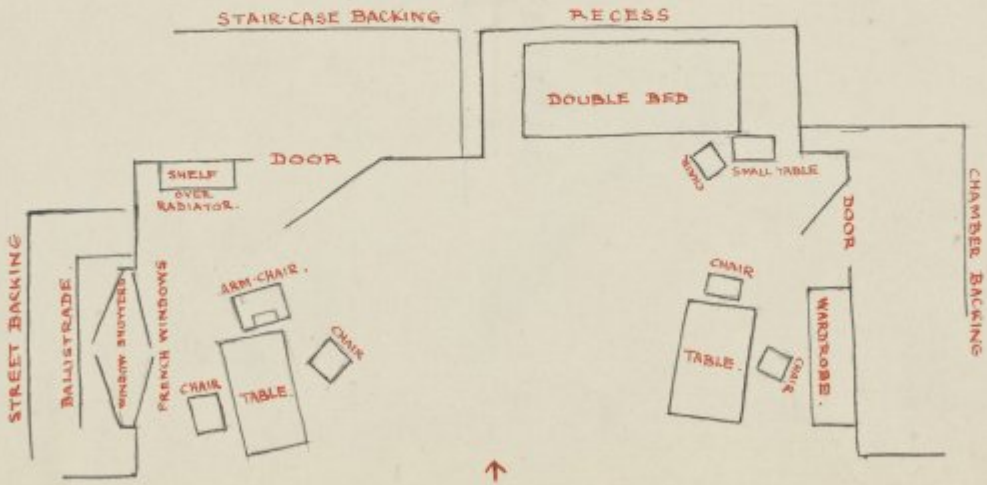
NOEL Your duty, Fleuriot.

FLORIOT Old friend, you are right. I will go to her, I will do my duty, I will bring her back [redacted] home [redacted] and I will pardon her with all my heart.

NOEL (Giving him his hand) And God be with you.

C U R T A I N

"MADAME X". ACT I.



ACT I.

MISS DICKENS TYPE-WRITING OFFICE
4 TAVISTOCK STREET
COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

Beginners: Miss Ashwell
Mr Hallard
Mr Gwenn.

Properties.

Visiting Card (Victor)
Tobacco Pouch, Pipe, matches. Loaded Revolver
Mirror (on wall R.C. at back) (Laroque)
Basin of Soap Suds. Towel. Hair brushes. (off P.S.)
Cigarettes - Absinthe - Sugar - Two glasses -
Matches - Water on tray. (Victor)
Snuff Box (Perissard)
Bag containing small pack of cards and phial
(Jacqueline)
Pen - Ink - Blotter (on Radiator)
Hotel Register - Wedding Ring (Marie)
Bag and overcoat (off O.P. Laroque)
Portmanteaux
Pocket Book (Perissard)
Matches on small table (P.S.)

A C T I.

Twenty years after at Bordeaux.

SCENE: - A poorly furnished room in a cheap hotel. (JACQUELINE enters R.C. at back followed by VICTOR, the valet, boots and general utility man of the Hotel, helping LAROQUE in with a small battered trunk and a cheap travelling bag. JACQUELINE is dressed in cheap and tawdry finery, is deathly pale and shows the carelessness of herself and her surroundings which drugs induce. LAROQUE is a ruffian of the "Bel Ami" type.

LAROQUE (putting down trunk C.) (looking round the room) H'm. I've seen bigger.

VICTOR (R.C.) It's the only room we've got left, Monsieur.

LAROQUE (to JACQUELINE) Not a palace, is it?

JACQUE: (indifferently) Oh, what does it matter, this room or another. (goes up C. puts hat etc. on bed and sits)

LAROQUE Well, I don't suppose we shall be here for long.

VICTOR There's a little dressing room in here.

LAROQUE Well - it'll do. Give me a hand with the trunk and the bag.

(VICTOR first followed by LAROQUE carry the trunk and the bag into the dressing room. LAROQUE leaves over-coat off P.S.)

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JACQUE: (Rises, goes to arm-chair, R.C., sits putting her feet up on small chair) Oh, I am tired!

LAROQUE (returning with VICTOR - VICTOR going C. followed by LAROQUE) Has anyone been for me? Mm.Laroque, Frederick Laroque.

VICTOR (handing him a card) This gentleman called about an hour ago.

LAROQUE Perissard!

VICTOR He said he would come back.

LAROQUE Good. Show him up when he does.

VICTOR Can I get you anything?

LAROQUE A bottle of absinthe.

VICTOR Yes, sir.

LAROQUE And some cigarettes - the yellow packets.

VICTOR Very good, sir.

(He goes out)

LAROQUE (looking at the visiting card) Perissard! I wonder what that old devil is up to now. (puts card in his waistcoat pocket)

JACQUE: This is better than the boat, anyhow, isn't it?

LAROQUE (going to shelf R.C. at back, emptying the pockets of his overcoat and putting a revolver there, among other things) Yes, I've had enough of the sea for a long time. You ought to be glad to be back in France again, you were anxious enough to see "La Belle France" weren't you?

JACQUE: I have been away from it twenty long years.

LAROQUE I should not wonder if you find a change or two.

(He takes off his coat, throws it on bed, goes out L. pours out water and during the rest of the scene he is in and out of the dressing room)

JACQUE: (wearily) I don't suppose I shall find any changes greater than those in myself.

LAROQUE (Coming back to C. tucking up his sleeves) Because you have cut your hair short? People often have their hair cut short for reasons of all kinds, and typhoid fever is a better reason than some. I rather like you with your short curly hair. You look like a boy dressed up. (takes her by the shoulders and then goes up to mirror R.C. at back - arranges tie)

JACQUE: I am not thinking of my hair. I am thinking of what I was twenty years ago when I left France and of what I am to-day.

LAROQUE (coming down to JACQ: hand on her shoulder) If it hurts to think of it my girl, don't think of it. (is going out L. taking off his waist-coat)

JACQUE: I suppose you are right. That may be the better way.

(LAR: throws waist-coat off L. goes out singing - washes loudly off P.S. JACQ: rises, goes to window R. throws it open and shutters also)

(LIGHTS UP)

LAROQUE Of course it is. What's done is done and cannot be altered, old girl. There are lots of women more to be pitied than you are.

(A pause as JACQ: opens windows. Then LAROQUE comes back drying his face to C.)

JACQUE I wonder!

LAROQUE To begin with, you have been the only woman I ever loved for the last six months. That ought to count for something, oughtn't it? (goes out L. to wash hands)

JACQUE: Twenty years ago! I was young and pretty then -

LAROQUE (coming back - soaping his hands) You look all right now - by gas light.

JACQUE: I had a husband and a child, twenty years ago - and now I am alone.

LAROQUE What about me, pray? Don't I count for something?

JACQUE: Rubbish! I don't want to play the fool.

LAROQUE Ha! Ha! So I see. Madam has her nerves, has she? (goes out L. singing)

JACQUE: (coming to C. and up C. to bed - throwing herself on it) I am sick of myself and of everything else. Life disgusts me. I'd sell mine for twopence.

LAROQUE (re-enters L. drying hands - comes to R. end of bed) It's worth a bit more than that. Come (slaps her and sits) now, old girl, buck up! You used to be a rich woman,

and now you are a poor one, but everybody has their ups and downs. Look at me, I used to be a lawyer's clerk once. Old Perissard's clerk, and look at me now. Take the times as they come, old girl, and money when you can lay your hands on it; that's my motto. Money's the only thing that matters.

JACQUE: I know. You would do anything for money.

LAROQUE Better that, than do nothing and get nothing for it. (ENTER VICTOR with a tray with Absinthe and cigarettes and glasses).

VICTOR Here's the absinthe.

LAROQUE Good! (signs to VICTOR who puts tray down on T. at R. - rises) Now, old girl, mix our drinks for us and mix them strong; you want your absinthe quite as badly as I want mine.

(JACQ: goes to chair L. of table at R. LAROQUE goes out singing (L) puts on waistcoat and comes back with hair-brushes - goes to mirror R.C. at back)

VICTOR (to VICTOR) Have you got the cigarettes?
There they are, sir.

LAROQUE Right! (throws brushes off L. VICTOR is going - is stopped by LAROQUE) What's going on in Bordeaux ? Anything amusing these days?

VICTOR Well, it's amusing sometimes. And then sometimes it isn't.

LAROQUE (laughing) Now we know all about it, don't we? (Goes to chair R. of table at R.C.)

VICTOR Will you dine at table d'hote?

LAROQUE What's the cooking like?

VICTOR Some people say it's good. And then again, some people say it isn't.

LAROQUE You are a perfect mine of information. (Taking cigarette lights it)

VICTOR Dinner's at seven.

LAROQUE Right!

VICTOR If you want anything, ring once for me and twice for the chambermaid.

LAROQUE Thank you.

VICTOR (coming down R.C. a little) Have you done with the absinthe?

LAROQUE (seizes up the bottle) Not till the bottle's empty. What do you take us for? Temperance preachers?

VICTOR Oh, it makes no difference to me, sir.

LAROQUE Possibly. But absinthe makes a good deal of difference to me.

(VICTOR goes out C.)

(Looking after him) A decent fellow, but a fool, that chap.

(JACQUELINE has prepared the absinthe and hands him a glass - LAROQUE sips it)

Ripping!

JACQUE (after drinking) Yes, it is good, isn't it?

LAROQUE It's great. There's nothing you do better than an absinthe, old girl. Light up, and let's be happy. (Takes cigarette from packet, gives it to JACQ: and lights match for her)

(They sit and smoke. He puts chair aside, sits on R. of table and commences to trim his nails)

JACQUE: Are we going to stop here long?

LAROQUE I don't know. That depends on Perissard. I must have a chat with him before I can say.

JACQUE Who is Perissard?

LAROQUE I told you I used to be his clerk. He is a lawyer.

JACQUE Yes, but what sort of man is he?

LAROQUE Oh, he's a clever old devil. He knows the Code Napoleon backwards. When I wrote to him before we left, I thought to myself, there's a postage stamp wasted, for Perissard has either retired from business, or he is making felt shoes somewhere in prison, or getting sunburned in New Caledonia. But I was wrong, you see. He is not in prison. He says he's glad to see me and he sent me 1000 francs to pay my trip. That knocked me edgeways, that did. The old devil must want me for something. He doesn't spend 1000 francs for nothing.

JACQUE: Be careful.

LAROQUE Don't worry. I'll keep my eyes wide open. (There is a knock at the door) Here he is, very likely.

(LAROQUE rises, comes to L.C., JACQ: goes to below table at L. her back to audience)

Come in!

(VICTOR enters, announces "Monsieur Perissard")

(ENTER PERISSARD and MERIVEL - PERISSARD is the older man; both have that look of ultra-respectability which is the necessary cloak to the errant scoundrel, but MERIVEL rather overdoes it. EXIT VICTOR).

PERIS: Well, Laroque.

LAROQUE Well, sir, and how are you? (shakes hands) By Jove, you have put on flesh, haven't you?

PERIS: (laughing) Oh, I put that on every morning with my other clothes. (goes up, puts hat on shelf at R., comes back)

LAROQUE Whatever for?

PERIS: Thin people do not inspire confidence somehow. Fat people always do. (LAROQUE a step up C.) (bowing to JACQUELINE) Madam!

LAROQUE (introducing) My life's companion for the last six months.

PERIS: Let me introduce M. Merivel, ex-schoolmaster and now my friend and partner. (introducing MERIVEL)

LAROQUE Delighted. But sit down, sit down. (PERI: sits L. of T. at R.C. MERI: sits R. of T. at R.C.) And let me

thank you, to begin with (To PERISSARD)

PERIS: For the 1000 francs I sent you?

LAROQUE Yes.

PERIS: When I got your letter it struck me that you might not be rolling in money.

LAROQUE (laughing) I wasn't - exactly. (gets chair from L., swings it round and sits C. facing PERI: astride of his chair)

PERIS: So I thought it as well to send you a little on account.

LAROQUE And supposing I had put the money in my pocket and remained in South America?

PERIS: I should have lost my thousand francs, but I wasn't afraid of that. I know you too well, I knew you to be too....too....

LAROQUE Too honest?

PERIS: Too intelligent to do such a foolish thing. What are 1,000 francs after all, in the position I am going to offer you?

LAROQUE As good as that, is it? (brings chair a little forward to R.)

PERIS: Ask Mm. Merival.

MERIVAL A first class position, admirable.

LAROQUE Well, that sounds interesting.

JACQUE: I will leave you to your business talk. I'll go and unpack the trunk.

LAROQUE Yes do, my girl.

(MERI: and PERI: rise and bow and sit again)

(JACQUELINE goes into the dressing room L.)

PERIS: Now then, to business.

LAROQUE (Rises - replaces his chair at L. - crosses to arm-chair R. and sits) To business, by all means!

PERIS: To begin with, I am no longer a solicitor.

LAROQUE So I see.

PERIS: Do you?

LAROQUE Yes, by your card (takes card from waistcoat - hands it to PERI: who puts it in his wallet) I see you call yourself a Notary Public.

(PERISSARD and MERIVEL laugh)

PERIS: That's to inspire confidence.

LAROQUE (laughing) I see, like your sham "Little Mary" (he taps it)

MERIVEL Ah yes, confidence is a beautiful thing in these days of disrespect. The young have ceased to respect the old,

the family solicitor of former days no longer holds the proud position that was his. Where are the snows of "yester year".

LAROQUE (staring at him) By Jove! he talks well, doesn't he?

PERIS: Like a book, he inspires confidence. Well, I am in business now.

LAROQUE What sort of business?

PERIS: Any sort of business. I refuse no kind of business.

MERIVEL With money in it.

PERIS: But we deal principally in the faults and vices and the weakness of our fellow-men.

LAROQUE Sounds a good trade.

MERIVEL And a most moral one, for we do good with the Strong Hand, you see. "Utile Dulci". Latin! h'm!

LAROQUE I don't altogether understand.

PERIS: You shall . There are very few houses without a skeleton in their cupboards.

MERIVEL Skeletons are cheap to-day.

PERIS: And in the best families there are often secrets which are worth a fortune.

LAROQUE Oh, I see, blackmail. (draws his glass to him)

PERIS: Sh-h! What an ugly word.

MERIVEL We are humble helpers in the cause of justice.

LAROQUE Pretty dangerous game, isn't it?

PERIS: Not for us.

LAROQUE And you find it pay?

PERIS: I should think it did. You will very soon find out for yourself, for I propose paying you in addition to your salary 10% upon the profits. You won't find it hard work and you won't find it difficult. (moving bottle on one side) All I require from you are quickness, discretion and tact. I know you pretty well, my dear Laroque. You are intelligent and energetic and I believe you to be honest enough - but not too scrupulously honest.

MERIVEL Scruples are out of date. "Ne quid nimis" Latin again! I beg your pardon.

PERIS: And you are very fond of money.

LAROQUE That's true enough.

PERIS: Well, then you shall have money. Do you accept?

LAROQUE (Rising - puts down his glass - comes down C.) It's a tempting offer, but you know I have just come out of... it is not very long since I was in trouble, and I don't want any more trouble, just now, if I can help it.

PERIS: What possible trouble can there be?

LAROQUE Well, you know, even a lamb will bleat if he's too roughly handled .

PERIS: Our little lambkins never bleat. They have a horror of all kinds of fuss, and do not draw attention to themselves if they can help it.

MERIVEL The fear of a fuss is the beginning of wisdom.

(LAROQUE goes to L. and then turns and sits lower end of table L.C.)

PERIS: (Rises, comes to R. of LAROQUE) So there is nothing to be afraid of. Our Head Office is in Paris, but I have come to Bordeaux to open a branch office, of which Merivel will be manager. In a little while, when you understand the business thoroughly, I will open a branch in Marseilles and put you in charge of that. Then I shall double your salary and increase your share of the profits to 15%

LAROQUE It's a bargain. (Rises, shakes hands with PERI:)

PERIS: Good!

MERIVEL I am sure you won't regret it.

(LAROQUE is crossing towards R. is stopped by PERISSARD)

PERIS: By the way, you aren't married, are you?

LAROQUE Lord, no! (Goes to table at R. hands cigarette to MERI: and starts to mix absinthe. PERI: takes snuff)

PERIS: That's all right.

MERIVEL Women are charming creatures, but in business....

PERIS: I was afraid, when I saw the lady who was here when we came in -

MERIVEL A charming woman too, artistic, good-looking --

LAROQUE I picked her up at Buenos Ayres. She hadn't a penny to bless herself with. There's no harm in her, but she takes drugs - a lot of trash, morphia, ether, opium and that sort of stuff, to help her to forget, she says. She's a married woman, you know, the wife of a man in a good position, and quite a shining light at the Bar.

PERIS: Really?

LAROQUE Yes, a Deputy Attorney in Paris. She was false to him and he turned her out. (PERIS: and MERI: exchange glances)

MERIVEL Ah, dear, oh dear, oh dear. Even the home lives of our leading lawyers are not above suspicion now-a-days.

LAROQUE (laughing) Have a drink? (holding up absinthe)

(MERIVEL refuses in dumb show)

PERIS: Was this long ago?

LAROQUE (bringing his glass to L. of table at R.C. sits end of it) Twenty years ago. She says she went to England when her husband turned her out. Since then, she has been to America, Colombia, Brazil - all over the place. She

has been rich and she has been poor. When I met her she had not got a penny and was dying to come back to France. So I brought her along.

PERIS: Did she tell you her story herself?

LAROQUE Yes. One day when she'd had a little more ether than usual. It's queer stuff that. (coming a little to C.) She's a silent kind of woman as a rule, but when she's been drinking ether, she gets talkative about her past and if she doesn't get maudlin too soon flies into furious rages and says anything. She won't live very long. She's worn out, poor thing. (goes back to table - puts down his glass)

PERIS: (coming a step to C.) If her husband was Deputy Attorney twenty years ago in Paris, he may be Attorney General now.

MERIVEL Or perhaps a Judge!

PERIS: This might lead to business.

LEROQUE How? (Turning to C. sits L. of table at R.C. MERI: brings his chair down below the table)

PERIS: Supposing the husband to occupy a position worth having, he would be likely to make a sacrifice to prevent scandal about his wife becoming known.

MERIVEL (admiringly) A marvellous man, the Governor, isn't he? He's always getting ideas like that. A benefactor of humanity, that's what I call him.

PERIS: Do you know her husband's name?

LAROQUE No, she's never told me that.

PERIS: I don't know that it matters. A Deputy Attorney in Paris, whose wife disappeared twenty years ago, ought not to be difficult to find.

MERIVEL Do you think so?

PERIS: (coming over to behind LAROQUE - hands on his shoulders) It's mere child's play. And this, my dear Laroque shall be your first piece of business.

LAROQUE I will do my best, guv'nor.

PERIS: You'd better go to Paris soon, I think -

LAROQUE As soon as you like. I am not in love with Bordeaux. (rises)

PERIS: (looking at his watch) Well, then, why not take the half past six train? You can get dinner in the restaurant car.

LAROQUE All right. (Rises, throws cigarettes on table at L.C., gets his coat and hat from bed. PERI: goes up R. C. and MERI: replaces his chair and comes up R.)

PERIS: I will give you a letter for my secretary in Paris and in twenty four hours he will have found our Deputy Attorney for us. Come round to the new office with me now and I will give you money and instruction.

LAROQUE (taking up his hat) At your orders, guv'nor.

PERIS: Of course you will go alone?

MERIVEL Without the lady.

LAROQUE Of course. And when shall I come back?

PERIS: In about a week.

LAROQUE Right! (opens the door up R.C.) After you guv'nor - after you Mr. Merivel.

(The three go out leaving the door open)

(ENTER JACQUELINE from the dressing room)

JACQUE: Ah, thank goodness they have gone. I should like to be alone always. (She closes door and is going to the window R. when she catches sight of herself in the glass, then backs to table at R.C. sitting top end of it) Oh, what a life, what a life!

(She sits at the table and takes a little bottle of ether out of her hand bag. She drinks from this - then takes out a pack of cards from her bag, rises from table, goes to chair above table L., sits and begins spreading them on the table. Presently she bursts out crying; then she recovers herself, dries her eyes and spreads the cards again, puts her bag on chair L.)

Now then, let's see, we will try once more. (A knock at the door) Come in!

(ENTER MARIE R.C. at back, the chambermaid with pen, ink, a glossy blotting pad and a printed slip of paper)

MARIE I hope I'm not disturbing you, madame, I have come up for the little police formality.

JACQUE: (looks at her without quite understanding - seeing what she means) Oh yes. Well then- write it down your-

self. (MARIE goes to shelf at R.) (she drinks from the ether bottle) Monsieur and Madame Laroque, from Buenos Ayres, on their way to Paris. (she lights a cigarette)

MARIE (writing) To Paris. Thank you, madame.

JACQUE: Is that all?

MARIE Yes, thank you. (she is going out, stops at door up R.) Are you telling your fortune with the cards. (coming down L.C.)

JACQUE Eh? - Yes.

MARIE Do you really believe in them?

JACQUE: They are the only things I do believe in.

MARIE That's funny. I don't believe in cards a bit.

JACQUE: (indifferently) You will - one day.

MARIE Oh, it's like palmistry and all that sort of thing; it's all nonsense.

JACQUE: You don't know what you are talking about. (she goes on placing the cards) Always the same thing, always the same thing.

MARIE (getting interested) What do they tell you?

JACQUE: Always the same thing, always the same thing. (she looks up at Marie stupidly) Death (JACQ: looks up - MARIE frightened, takes a step back) my own death, and it's coming very soon; that's what the cards foretell for me.

MARIE (interested) Do they?

JACQUE: (touching the cards as she speaks) They never change. I can see blood, a great deal of blood. But before I die, I shall see the two people whom I always see, in all my dreams, waking and sleeping; the man whom I love more than anything else in the world and the man whom I hate more than anything else in the world. The cards have been promising me for the last three months that I shall see them soon and then that I shall die. The cards have never failed me yet. That's why I wanted to come back to France.

MARIE You believe in them as much as that?

JACQUE: Yes.

MARIE (after some hesitation) Won't you tell my fortune with them?

JACQUE What's the good if you don't believe in them?

MARIE Oh I don't believe in them, of course, but I...I... should like my fortune told.

(MARIE goes round above table putting her book on small table by bed - comes down L. and sits L. of table)

JACQUE Sit down (JACQ: gives the cards to MARIE - says "Shuffle", then drinks from ether bottle)

MARIE (sniffing) What is that you're drinking, madame?

JACQUE: Ether.

MARIE It smells horribly strong. What does it do?

JACQUE: It makes me think of other things - That helps. Cut in seven - left hand!!! But sometimes it gets on my nerves and then I either cry my heart out or smash all the furniture.

(MARIE starts)

Don't fidget . I'm quiet enough now. What do you want the cards to tell you?

MARIE But if I tell you that, there will be nothing extraordinary in your telling my fortune, will there? (Puts her left hand on the table)

JACQUE: Don't tell me anything. (she spreads the cards) You're married.

MARIE Oh, there's nothing wonderful in that. You saw my wedding ring.

JACQUE: You've got a child.

MARIE Yes, he is out to nurse, the darling. He's seven months old.

JACQUE: You're in love.

MARIE (excitedly) Yes.

JACQUE: But not with your husband.

MARIE (emphatically) No. (she turns her head away)

JACQUE You are going to leave your husband and go away with the other man.

MARIE (astonished) That's wonderful!

JACQUE: Is it true?

MARIE Yes, it is quite true. My husband is Victor, the boots, who brought up your luggage.

JACQUE: He seems to be a good fellow.

MARIE Yes, but he's such a common sort of man.

JACQUE: And the other?

MARIE Oh, the other is a gentleman, a real gentleman. He's a commercial traveller - in soap. He dresses beautifully, and he smells - ah - m-m. I am going to meet him to-night at nine o'clock, at the Grand Café opposite the theatre. We shall be far away to-morrow.

JACQUE: And what about your child?

MARIE (shamefacedly) I know his father will never let him want for anything?

JACQUE: (Seizing Marie's hand) Look here, my girl, you're going

to make a fool of yourself. Take my tip and remain with your husband. Be false to him if you must, but stay with him.

MARIE — No, no! I love nobody in the world but Anatole, and I am going away with him to-night.

JACQUE: — You'll suffer in the long run.

MARIE — No, I shan't. Anatole loves the very ground I walk on.

JACQUE: — (Laughing ironically - MARIE is afraid) He may do so now, my dear, but that won't last. Your lover will leave you, and you will take another and then a third and a fourth, and you will see what that sort of a life means in the end. I know it.

MARIE — Do you?

JACQUE: — Yes, I was about your age when I left my husband and my child. I hate my husband. God! how I hate him!

(A pause)

But I am dying for my child. Child! why he must be twenty-four years old now, and I am sure he is tall and strong and handsome and that everybody who knows him, loves him and admires him. Just think of it, I might be walking down the street on his arm now. How proud I should be! And I don't even know him, and if he were to come into this room now, I should wonder who it was. But I shall see him again. (she lays her hands on the cards) I am sure of that. I know it. (Picks up pack of cards and drops them on table) But I shall never be allowed to kiss him and to strain him to my heart. He will never know who I am.

MARIE — Why not?

JACQUE: I shall be too ashamed to let him know. He might despise me or reproach me and I could not stand that. Ah, Raymond, my boy. (she bursts out crying)

MARIE (Rising a step back to wardrobe) Don't cry, madame, don't cry.

JACQUE: Let my case help you. You are a pretty girl now, but that will soon pass, and your lover will leave you as all mine have left me. Men soon get tired. I, too, was pretty once.

MARIE (crying) I am sure Anatole will never leave me.

JACQUE Of course you are sure. (MARIE goes up, gets book at L. and is going out R.C.) Other people's experience never helped anybody yet.

MARIE (coldly) There's nothing I can do for you?

(LAROQUE is heard whistling)

JACQUE (wearily) No, thanks. (takes ether)

(MARIE going out R.C.)

(LAROQUE enters, sees MARIE who exits - comes to table R.)

LAROQUE (taking off his hat) Pretty girl, that chambermaid. Do you know, that Perissard is a wonderful chap. (Having put his hat on table R. comes to above JACQ: watching her)

JACQ: Is he?

LAROQUE I should think he was; brimful of ideas too.

JACQUE: Has he got anything for you?

LAROQUE (Takes off his coat - puts it on bed) Rather! He has offered me a situation in his office.

JACQUE: What does he do in his office?

LAROQUE Oh, business.

JACQUE: What kind of business?

LAROQUE Business of all kinds. He is really an extraordinary chap (coming down to chair L. of JACQ:) Do you know, that, directly he saw you, he saw that you were a woman of good family.

JACQUE: Did he really?

LAROQUE Yes. There's blood in her, he said. Blood, that was the expression he used. (sits chair L. of table)

JACQUE: (drinking ether) Here's his health.

LAROQUE I told him he was right, of course.

JACQUE! What did you tell him?

LAROQUE (Leaning back in his chair - puts his feet on the table) (laughing) I told him, after making him promise to keep it secret, that you were the daughter of a General, that your father and mother were very rich, and that your husband was a Marquis, to whom you had brought 300,000 francs on your marriage.

JACQUE: (on whom the ether is beginning to have effect, laughing) Ah, that's very good. And he believed that, did he?

LAROQUE (LAUGHING) Every word of it. (JACQ STILL LAUGHING BUT LAROQUE CEASES & LEANS OVER TO HER) What do you think of that, eh? 300,000 francs! And I suppose you did not have a cent, did you?

JACQUE: (haughtily, rising. The ether is affecting her strongly) I beg your pardon. I did not bring my husband 300,000 francs certainly, but I brought him 125,000 francs. (she goes up to bed)

LAROQUE (laughing) You're not telling the truth.

JACQUE: (with drunken solemnity) I assure you it is true.

LAROQUE (Rising, comes round C. and up towards JACQ:) No, no! You're pulling my leg.

JACQUE: (sits on bed) I swear it.

LAROQUE Truth and Honour?

JACQUE: Truth and honour.

LAROQUE 125,000 francs?

JACQUE (irritably) 125,000 francs!!

LAROQUE Then where is it?

JACQUE What do you mean?

LAROQUE Did your husband give it back to you again?

JACQUE No, of course not!

LAROQUE (sitting beside her on the bed) I can't believe you were such a fool as that. Do you mean to tell me, that when your husband turned you out, you did not ask him for your money?

JACQUE The money is not mine.

LAROQUE Whose is it then?

JACQUE My son's.

LAROQUE But you're alive still. (JACQ: rises, comes down R.C.) Your son will get it when you die, but you're not dead yet.

JACQUE: My son thinks I am dead; his father told him I was, and when he was twenty-one he probably came into my fortune.

LAROQUE What fools you women are. I don't suppose he ever saw a half-penny of it. (lies on bed)

JACQUE: (turns C. and then sits L. of table R.C.) (getting angry) And what if he didn't. It's nothing to do with you, is it? What business is it of yours, anyhow?

LAROQUE (rising from bed - coming down to JACQ:) No, but you ought to clear it up. That's what Perissard thinks, and Perissard knows what he's talking about.

JACQUE: What business is it of Perissard's?

LAROQUE He only spoke in your interest; when I told him that you had brought your husband 300,000 francs he asked me whether you had got it back. I said I didn't know, and he declared that you had a right to claim the money .

JACQUE: (Rises, goes to table at L.C. sits lower end of it - her feet on chair) Well, I shan't claim it.

LAROQUE (coming towards JACQ:) Why not?

JACQUE Because I don't want it.

LAROQUE Why not?

JACQUE I'd rather beg in the streets, I'd rather starve in the gutter, than ask that man for a farthing.

LAROQUE Yes, of course, I understand that. That's natural pride, that is. But you might get somebody else to get your money for you; you might give somebody a Power of Attorney, and...

JACQUE Signed with my name and address, I suppose? No, thank you.

LAROQUE Well, a letter then. I should think a letter would do just as well. Look here, give me a letter to your husband, and I will go and get your money for you. (sits beside her)

JACQUE: (passionately) I would rather die than that my son should know I am alive. He must never hear of me again!

I would rather kill myself than that. (excitedly) Yes, I would. I would rather kill myself. (she kicks the chair away)

LAROQUE (He picks up the chair) But he never will know.

JACQUE: If he ever thinks of me at all, I want him to regret me, I want him to feel a moment's sorrow now and then, because his mother is no longer with him. He has never known me, he never shall know what I am.

LAROQUE Don't get excited.

JACQUE I don't want my son to know the kind of woman his mother has become. And he shan't know it, he shall never know it! (goes up to Radiator at R.) Never, I tell you - never!

LAROQUE (replacing fallen chair - following her up) Don't lose your temper. Who on earth is going to tell him? I certainly shan't and I don't suppose his father will.

JACQUE: (sulkily) I don't want to talk about it any more. (goes to window)

LAROQUE But the money's worth the trouble.

JACQUE: Damn the money! (coming above table at R. towards C.)

LAROQUE 125,000 Francs would make a lot of difference to us, mind you. (coming towards her puts his hand on her arm)

JACQUE: (Flinging his arm away and crossing to C.) Oh, shut your mouth! I tell you I won't talk about the money.

LAROQUE (swings her round) Look here, try and keep a civil tongue in your head, or I'll teach you who you are talking to.

JACQUE (insultingly) You can't teach me more than I know about that.

LAROQUE (looks at his watch) Will you write me a letter to your husband, so that I can get the money?

JACQUE No!

LAROQUE Very well, I'll do without a letter.

(LAROQUE goes up C. takes his coat from bed and goes out L. There is a pause. JACQ: goes very slowly to chair R.C. and sits)

JACQUE: What do you mean?

LAROQUE (from the dressing-room) There's no difficulty in finding a Deputy-Attorney.

JACQUE: (She rises - goes up L C.) What are you doing in there?

LAROQUE Dressing.

JACQUE Are you going out?

LAROQUE (coming in, he comes down L.) Yes, I am going out.

JACQUE: (coming towards him at table L;C.) Where are you going?

LAROQUE To Paris .

JACQUE: To-night?

LAROQUE By the 6.30 train.

JACQUE: I'll come with you.

LAROQUE No, you won't.

JACQUE: Why?

LAROQUE Perissard objects. (goes to mirror R to arrange his tie)

JACQUE (coming up C) You are not to try and find my husband. I forbid you to do that.

LAROQUE Mind your own business and let me mind mine. (pushing her aside he goes out L. for his overcoat)

JACQUE: You are not to ask him for my money.

LAROQUE I shall do what I like. (coming in - is going towards table R.C.)

JACQUE (fiercely angry) You shall not go! (getting in front of him)

LAROQUE What kind of a fool do you think I am? Who's going to prevent me?

JACQUE I am.

LAROQUE (fiercely) Take care, my girl, or you'll regret it. (pulls her out of his way - goes to table for his hat and is going out again L. for his bag - she follows him)

JACQUE (catching hold of his coat) You are not to go, I tell you. You are not to go into my husband's house and claim my child's money. I won't let you go.

LAROQUE (Pushing her on one side so that she falls against door up R.) Oh, leave me alone.

(He goes into the dressing-room)

(JACQUELINE picks up the revolver and gets between the dressing-room and the other door of the room)

JACQUE: (to herself) No, you shan't go, you shan't go - you shan't go.

(LAROQUE comes out of the dressing-room with a small bag - comes to go out of door up R.)

You shan't go, I tell you.

LAROQUE (laughing) We shall see.

JACQUE (hiding the revolver) Take care!

LAROQUE Don't be a fool. Get out of the way, or I'll make you. (with his bag in his left hand he takes her by the shoulders and swings her round to table at L.C.)

JACQUE (bringing out the revolver and firing) There then.

(LAROQUE with his hand on the door handle staggers - sways and falls with his head down stage at R.C. JACQUE: dazed stands looking at him. MARIE, VICTOR and other SERVANTS come rushing into the room)

VICTOR What's the matter?

(MAID-SERVANT STANDING IN DOOR R.C.) 32

MARIE (Kneeling by Laroque) He's dead! (She turns away up stage)

VICTOR She has killed him. (He rushes at JACQUE: L. side of her, takes the smoking revolver from her hand and holds her fast) Go for the police, somebody - quick -

(MAID-SERVANT STANDING IN DOORWAY HURRIES OFF R.)

JACQUE (slowly) There's no hurry. I shan't try to get away.

C U R T A I N

"MADAME X" ACT II.

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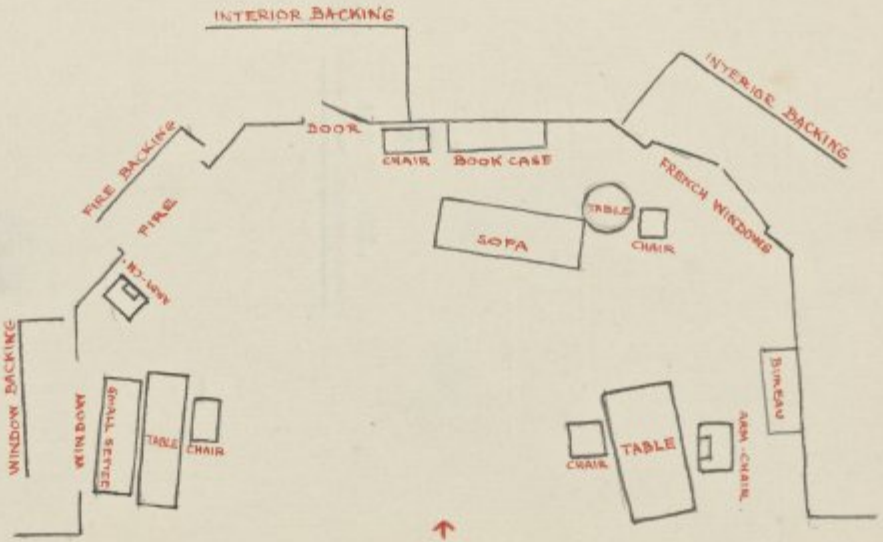


A C T II.

53X3
THEATRE COLLECTION

Bell.
Artificial flowers. (Helene)
Vases.
Speech and brief (off P.S. for Raymond)
Books (Book-cases)
Visiting card (on Salver off O.P. at back)
Document (for Perissard)
4 (100 franc) bank-notes (Floriot)

A C T II.

SCENE:- Raymond Flériot's study in Bordeaux.

(As the curtain rises ROSE is arranging papers on the office table. The bell rings: she goes out C and comes back with PERISSARD and MERIVEL)

PERIS: Is Mr. Flériot in? (Coming down R.)

ROSE Mr. Raymond Flériot?

PERIS: No, his father.

MERIVEL Who lives in Toulouse.

PERIS: And whom his son expected here last night.

ROSE You - - ?

PERIS We have come from Toulouse. We went down there to see President Flériot on an important piece of business.

(ROSE offers them CHAIRS L&R. PERIS: sits L.C. and MERIVEL R.C.)

MERIVEL Most important.

PERIS: And we were told that he had just left for Bordeaux to hear his son plead his first case.

ROSE — President Fleriot is here in Bordeaux, but he is out for the moment.

PERIS: — Will he be in soon?

ROSE — In an hour or so I expect.

(A bell rings)

I beg your pardon.

(She goes out. MERIVEL puts his hat on table at R.C., PERISSARD rises coming towards MERIVEL)

PERIS: — (To MERIVEL) No doubt about him. He's our man.

MERIVEL — And we are not a day too soon as his wife will be on trial for murder to-morrow.

PERIS: — Clever his coming to Bordeaux.

MERIVEL — Fleriot is no fool.

PERIS: — I should think not. He gets his own son chosen for the defence and, if gossip be true, the boy is going to marry the daughter of the Public Prosecutor.

MERIVEL — (Rises goes to PERISSARD) Very well thought out.

PERIS: — And they tell me that the prisoner, Fleriot's wife has refused to say a word all through, to the Examining Magistrate in answer to his questions.

MERIVEL — Of course. The husband has been telling her just what to do.

PERIS: Obviously. (Comes over to table L.C. then turns C.) In this way you see her name won't even be mentioned, and as nobody knows her in Bordeaux - ----

MERIVEL (Coming towards L.C.) None of the trouble will get outside of the family.

PERIS The Jury will find her guilty or acquit her. That is of no importance whatever, and nobody will ever know who she is --

MERIVEL Except our little selves.

PERIS: Just so. And our silence will cost quite a little money.

(They laugh. ROSE heard off R. "This way Mam'selle." MERIVEL goes R.C. and PERIS: a little up L.C.)

(ENTER ROSE followed by HELENE carrying a bouquet. PERISSARD and MERIVEL bow to HELENE)

ROSE Come in Mademoiselle. (HELENE comes down C. and puts flowers on table L.C.)

PERIS: (To ROSE going up C.) We will come back in half an hour.

ROSE Will you leave me your names?

PERIS: Oh, thank you. Our names are not known to M. Fleuriot.

MERIVEL (Going up C.) So we won't leave them.

PERIS: But he will know them before long. (They bow and EXIT, first PERISSARD - and then MERIVEL, with ROSE.)

(HELENE goes over to mirror at mantel R. ROSE comes in R.C. at back)

HELENE (To ROSE) Is M. Fleriot rested after his journey?

ROSE Oh yes. (She goes about the room dusting) He said at breakfast that he had had a good night. (At sofa up L.C.)

HELENE He didn't mention me?

ROSE No, I have hardly seen him since he came. (Goes to window R.)

HELENE (Coming to table at L.C.) I have brought him a few flowers from our garden.

ROSE (Coming C.) Let me put them in water.

HELENE He used to like our roses.

ROSE (Smelling them) I dare say he will like them still.

HELENE You have known him a long time haven't you?

(HELENE goes to chair R. C.)

ROSE For more than thirty years, Mademoiselle.

(ROSE takes flowers to table R.C. then goes to mantel for vases - brings them to table R.C.)

When they made him President of the Toulouse Court he asked me to stay with M. Raymond. So I left him to come here though I was sorry to do it. I did not see why his son could not go to Toulouse with him instead of living alone here in Bordeaux. The father and son are so fond of one another too. There doesn't seem any reason for their separation.

HELENE I know why they have separated. Raymond told me. (Sits chair R.C.)

ROSE Why?

HELENE It is quite simple. Raymond is a lawyer.

ROSE Yes, what then?

HELENE Well, the law forbids a son to plead in a court of which his father is judge.

ROSE What a funny idea. (Throws paper from flowers in basket at table L.C. then comes back to L. of HELENE.)

HELENE Yes, it seems queer, but it is the law. So you see if Raymond were a lawyer in Toulouse, as his father is President of the Court there -

ROSE He would not get any cases.

HELENE And it is hard enough to get them as it is, is it not?

ROSE (Goes to top of table R.C.) Well, you have got to begin.

HELENE And Raymond is beginning to-morrow. To-morrow he is pleading his first case.

ROSE And a capital case to start with, he says. A murder case. People always talk about murder trials.

HELENE I hope he will win. (Rises) I have not thought about anything else for a week. (Going R. then up C.)

ROSE — Oh I am not anxious about that. Mr. Raymond is clever, and he will twist the jury round his little finger.

HELENE — Oh, I hope so. (Going a little L. stops) He is out, you said?

ROSE — Yes, I think he has gone to the prison to see his client.

HELENE — (Going to windows L.) Do you think he will be back soon, Rose?

ROSE — (Smiling) That depends. Does he know you are here?

HELENE — I don't think so.....No.....I only told him that my father was going to call on Mr. Floriot at about eleven o'clock and that I might come and meet him.

(ROSE laughs)

Rose what are you laughing at?

ROSE — (Coming C.) Oh, at nothing in particular.

HELENE — (Coming to L. of ROSE) Don't tease me, tell me.

ROSE — Well, I was laughing because you come here in such a hurry at ten minutes to ten to meet your father who won't be here until eleven.

HELENE — I suppose you think me silly.

ROSE — Oh dear no. I am only too happy to see that Mr Raymond loves you and that you love him.

HELENE Really. Does that make you glad?

ROSE Very glad.

(HELENE kisses her)

HELENE You're rather a dear, you know, Rose.

ROSE I brought that young man up Mademoiselle, and I feel as though he belonged to me a little, that's why I am so happy that he has made so good a choice.

HELENE (Backing to sofa L.C. sits) He is going to talk to his father about it this morning.

ROSE I don't think he will surprise him.

HELENE You think that M. Fleuriot suspects?

ROSE That you and Raymond are in love with one another?

(Backing towards chair R.C. sits)

Of course he does. One would have to be blind not to see it. Every one in the neighbourhood knows.

HELENE Oh!

ROSE The baker asked me yesterday when the wedding was going to be, and the day before yesterday it was the butcher.

(RAYMOND comes in quickly L.U.E. is going to table at L.C. sees HELENE, goes to her - she rises. ROSE rises. RAYMOND puts document on table L.C.)

RAYMOND There you are.

ROSE (Taking vases and coming C.) (Laughing) Yes, there she is, and quite by accident. You didn't expect to see her did you?

(She laughs and goes out carrying the flowers. RAYMOND comes C. shaking his fist at ROSE - then comes back to R. of HELENE and kisses her hand)

HELENE You never thought I should come so early anyhow.

RAYMOND (Laughing) No, I never expected you in the least. I should not wonder if that was why I have run all the way home from the prison.

HELENE (Sitting R. end of sofa) And are you glad to find me here?

RAYMOND (Sitting R. arm of sofa. Taking her hand) It seems weeks since I saw you last.

HELENE (Laughing) Twenty-four hours.

RAYMOND And every hour a quarter of a century.

HELENE Have you thought of me since yesterday.

RAYMOND What an absurd question.

HELENE Often?

RAYMOND All the time.

HELENE Ah! Did you dream of me?

RAYMOND Reality is too sweet a dream for us both to need sleep dreams.

HELENE (Seriously) Have you been working hard?

RAYMOND (Rising) Yes, I was up at five o'clock -

HELENE Five o'clock!

RAYMOND This morning-finishing my speech for the defence. I am quite ready now. (Goes to chair L. of table L.C. and sits)

HELENE (Rising comes to chair above table L.C.) And the case comes off to-morrow.

RAYMOND To-morrow is the great day.

HELENE You will let me come and hear you won't you? (Stretching out her hand to him)

RAYMOND (Taking her hand - she sits top end of table L.C.) Of course, I want you to be there. But I will ask you to find a place in court where I can't see you.

HELENE Why?

RAYMOND My wits would go wool gathering, if I caught sight of you. And just think what it would mean if I were to stutter and stammer and stop dead with you in court. I should never get over it.

HELENE And you have made up your mind to talk to your father .....to-day?

RAYMOND Yes. As soon as he comes in.

HELENE You will have to be careful not to stutter and stammer and stop dead this morning.

RAYMOND — Oh, I shan't do that. That is the one case that I can plead, - our case. (Taking her hands)

(ROSE comes in with HELENE'S flowers in a vase, puts them on the mantel R.)

ROSE — The President has just come in.

HELENE — (Rising) Now Raymond! Shoulder arms! (Turns up towards door R.C.)

(RAYMOND laughs)

(FLORIOT comes in R.C. at back looking much older than in the last act. He sees HELENE, but not RAYMOND at first)

FLORIOT — Good morning, my child. (He takes her face between his two hands and kisses her)

RAYMOND — (Rising comes to below FLORIOT) You might say good morning, my children.

FLORIOT — (Smiling) Might I? Then I will. (He takes a hand of each of them looks from one to the other and says) Good morning my two dear children.

ROSE — (Bringing flowers down R.C.) Mademoiselle Helene has brought you these roses.

FLORIOT — (Turning to ROSE smells the flowers - then goes up to book-case C. at back) They are charming, like the donor.

HELENE — Oh, Mr. Floriot. (Under her breath to RAYMOND) I think you might venture.

RAYMOND — So do I. (HELENE [redacted] R. end of sofa - RAYMOND comes to behind table L.C.)

ROSE — (To FLORIOT) Two gentlemen were here while you were

out and asked to see you.

FLORIOT (At book-case) To see me? In Bordeaux? Who were they?

ROSE I have never seen them before. They said they had come on business of importance and that they had come from Toulouse.

FLORIOT Did they leave their cards?

ROSE No; they said that you did not know them by name and that they would come back.

FLORIOT Very well.

(ROSE goes out C. FLORIOT turns up to book-case. HELENE signals to RAYMOND who comes to below her)

HELENE My father told me to tell you that he would be here at eleven, M. Floriot.

FLORIOT I shall be charmed to see him again. (Puts book away)

HELENE (Signalling to RAYMOND) I will go and fetch him if you don't mind.

FLORIOT (Coming down C.) (Smiling) I shall not be very angry.

(HELENE goes up L. of FLORIOT. RAYMOND goes up R. towards door)

RAYMOND In an hour then.

(HELENE goes out. FLORIOT comes down to chair R. of table L.C. and sits)

(RAYMOND coming down to R. of FLORIOT)

RAYMOND (With mimic solemnity) Is Mr. President extremely busy?

FLORIOT (Smiling) Extremely busy.

RAYMOND What a beastly nuisance.

FLORIOT Did you want to speak to me?

RAYMOND Yes, and quite seriously.

FLORIOT For long?

RAYMOND No not for very long. At least I don't think it will take very long to say.

FLORIOT (Laughing) Try it in four words.

RAYMOND I love Helene Valmorin.

FLORIOT (Laughing) You don't mean to say so?

RAYMOND Then you knew?

FLORIOT You must think me as blind as - as Cupid.

RAYMOND And I want to marry her.

FLORIOT I can quite understand that.

(FLORIOT rises - puts his hand on RAYMOND'S shoulder)

Well, God bless you and make you happy then.

RAYMOND — Oh, sir!

FLORIOT — Is that all you want to say?

RAYMOND — Yes, that is all.

FLORIOT — (With a change of tone) My boy, you are a good fellow and you have been the one joy of my life. I think Helene is worthy of you. Love her my lad and love her always whatever happens. Above all do your best to understand her. Women are not always easy to understand, but do not leave your wife out of your own life and share every one of her joys and sorrows. You will have hours of bitterness perhaps. Most men do; never forget that a husband has a heavy responsibility. Always remember, Raymond, that you are responsible for the life and soul and happiness of her who gives herself to you.

RAYMOND — I don't think the responsibility will be a very heavy one in my case father. (Shaking FLORIOT'S hand, goes to L. of table L.C.)

FLORIOT — Life is sometimes cruel my boy. Valmorin will be here presently and I will have a talk with him. But before I can ask him to give you his daughter's hand, there is something which I must tell him - something which I have not told even to you!

RAYMOND — A secret?

FLORIOT — Yes, I will tell you all about it afterwards.

RAYMOND — Your secret won't prevent him from ---

FLORIOT (Smiling) No, I don't think so.

RAYMOND You frightened me.

FLORIOT (Sitting chair R. of table L.C.) I hope and think that he will give his consent. Mind you, I don't expect that Helene will be very rich.

RAYMOND (Happily) I know she won't.

FLORIOT You have 125,000 francs from your poor mother, and I will add as much as I can myself.

RAYMOND Oh we shall have enough to live upon. You seem to forget my briefs.

FLORIOT You haven't any.

(RAYMOND taking document from drawer)

RAYMOND I have one. It brings nothing to my bank account I know, but other briefs and fees will follow.

FLORIOT Are you quite ready for to-morrow?

RAYMOND Yes, quite ready.

FLORIOT I saw the Presiding Judge of the Assize Court this morning, and he was full of praise of you. They are going to make room for me on the bench to-morrow.

RAYMOND You will make me terribly nervous.

FLORIOT Not a bit of it. Is it an interesting case?

RAYMOND No, quite a commonplace one. A wretched woman who has killed her lover for no reason that any one can find out.

(Leaning over table)

And she won't speak. For the last three months she has not spoken a word in prison that can be of interest to anybody. We don't know who she is, where she comes from, or what her name is. I haven't even seen her, and when, the names of the Judges, the Public Prosecutor and her defending Lawyer were handed to her, she tore the paper up without looking at it.

FLORIOT And couldn't the examining Magistrate get anything out of her?

RAYMOND No - Nothing.

FLORIOT What sort of a woman is she?

RAYMOND A woman of mystery. I am afraid that it is one of those cases that will take just about five minutes and will not get into the papers at all. I shall do my best. But I am not going to have a very easy time of it. It is difficult to find excuses for a crime when you don't know why it was committed.

FLORIOT You must invent some reasons for it. As your Client will not speak she will not contradict you. Profit by her silence to give your imagination play. Say that she is a victim of heredity. Say anything that you can think of but romp away with the jury's feelings or you will lose your case.

(ROSE coming in R. C. at back.)

ROSE Mr. Noel has come sir.

RAYMOND Show him in, show him in.

(ROSE goes out and NOEL ENTERS C. RAY rises)

FLORIOT (going to him) Well, old friend, how are you?

NOEL I am all right thanks. And how are you?

FLORIOT Well enough. (rises goes to fire R.)

NOEL I need not ask how you are Maitre Raymond. So to-morrow is the great day eh?

RAYMOND Yes, to-morrow is the day.

NOEL Feel frightened?

RAYMOND A little excited. Have you really come all the way from Paris on purpose.

NOEL Of course I have.

RAY: That is good of you!

NOEL I would have come from Kamskatka to see you fight your first battle.

FLORIOT (to NOEL) Chennel is coming too you know.

NOEL Chennel?

FLORIOT Dr Chennel. You met him about twenty years ago in my house at Passy.

NOEL Yes, I remember now. (To RAYMOND) You were not in particularly blooming health that day young man!

RAYMOND No, so I have been told. Dr Chennel has a practice at Biarritz now and lives there with his sister, Mme. Varenne. I often see him and he often comes and stays with me.

NOEL I shall be delighted to see him again.

RAYMOND (going in front of NOEL up C.) Father - if Mr. Noel doesn't mind, I'll go and think out my speech again,

and see whether I can work in some of the things you suggested.

FLORIOT Yes, shake them up my boy, that is what you must do. After all this poor woman may be more sinned against than sinning.

RAYMOND That's just the view I'm taking. (he goes out R. C.)

FLORIOT (to NOEL) What do you think of the boy?

NOEL You ought to be proud of him.

FLORIOT I am. Very proud.

NOEL I can never look at him without thinking of his mother - (sigh) It is awful to think that we have had no news of her for twenty years.

FLORIOT Both awful and incredible. (coming down C. and then up to fire) I have done all I can. I have employed detectives, advertised, done everything, I went to Monte Carlo the other day, to see a woman who I thought might have been Jacqueline. But it was not she.

NOEL Poor Jacqueline! (sits chair R. of table R. C.)

FLORIOT I think sometimes she must be dead or we should have found her.

NOEL Perhaps. And perhaps that is the best thing that could have happened.

FLORIOT She would have tried to see her child again if she had been alive.

NOEL Poor little Jenny Wren.

FLORIOT (comes to R. of Noel) I have never dared yet to tell Raymond the truth. But I shall have to do so now.

NOEL Why?

FLORIOT He wants to get married.

NOEL I see.

FLORIOT And I must tell him the truth.

NOEL Will you tell him the whole truth?

FLORIOT Yes. He must know how pitiless I was to her when she came home, repentant. What will he think of me?

NOEL Oh - - -

FLORIOT Oh I have no illusions. Youth does not make allowances. He may not cease to love me when he knows the truth, but will he ever forgive me?

NOEL Of course he will.

FLORIOT But the boy is in love. He will never understand that I could treat the woman I love with such harshness. He will think me a monster.

NOEL Oh no he won't.

(ROSE ENTERS R. C. with a visiting card. Comes to R. of FLORIOT)

FLORIOT (to ROSE) What is it?

ROSE The two gentlemen who were here before and who want to see President Fleriot.

FLORIOT Show them in, and take Mm·Noel up to his room.

ROSE Very well, sir. (SHE goes out)

FLORIOT (looking at the card) Perissard, I don't know the name. Confidential missions legal business. Oh ho! Shady customer I fancy. (goes to fire-place R.)

NOEL (laughing) Well I suppose you can take care of yourself. (rising)

(ROSE returns with PERRISARD and MERIVEL, she intimates to them which is "M. le President")

ROSE (to NOEL) This way, sir. Your bag has been taken up.

NOEL Thank you.

(They EXIT L. U. E.)

FLORIOT What can I do for you gentlemen?

PERIS: Have I the honour of speaking to President Fleriot?

FLORIOT Yes, sir. Your name is -

PERI: Perissard, and this is Mm·merivel, my partner.

FLORIOT And what business brings you to Bordeaux.

PERIS: A matter of some delicacy, Mr President, which interests you personally.

FLORIOT (He signifies that they may take chairs - goes to chair L. of table L. C.) Well? (he sits at writing table)

(PERISSARD sits R. of table L. C. and MERIVEL above table L. C.)

PERIS: Every man has at one time or another in his life reason to regret the past and these regrets sometimes, however secretly we hide them remain open wounds.

MERIVEL Alas!

FLORIOT I don't understand; kindly explain yourself.

PERIS: Mr President, you were Deputy-Attorney in Paris twenty years ago, were you not?

FLORIOT Yes.

PERIS: And if I am correctly informed you married a lady named Jacqueline Lefevre at the Town Hall in the Rue Drouot. She brought you 125000 francs.

FLORIOT Your information is perfectly correct. But why these questions?

PERIS: Because they are indispensable. In family affairs of this kind one cannot take too many precautions. In matters of honour, I have always said ---

FLORIOT (rising) (Nervously) My time is rather limited.

(DERIVEL and PERISSARD rise)

PERIS: I beg your pardon. (They all sit) Your marriage, sir, was not altogether as happy as it might have been, and one day, after a violent scene, you turned out of your house the lady who had the honour of bearing your name.

FLORIOT How do you know this? Who told you?

PERIS: Is it true?

FLORIOT Yes.

PERIS: Very good. After this incident, Madame Fleuriot travelled. She travelled far, was more or less happy in her life, more or less ----

FLORIOT And she is dead. Is that what you have come to tell me?

PERIS: No, no, compose yourself.

FLORIOT She is alive?

PERIS: Undoubtedly.

FLORIOT And where is she? In France? In Paris?

PERIS: Do you really mean to say that you don't know?

FLORIOT No. Have you not come to tell me?

PERIS: That is really most extraordinary. I should have

thought that with all your means of getting information -

FLORIOT I have never heard from her or of her since she disappeared.

PERIS: Never?

FLORIOT No, I thought her dead.

PERIS: (to MERIVEL) Extraordinary is it not?

MERIVEL Most extraordinary.

FLORIOT But you know, do you not, where she is and where I can see her?

PERIS: Oh yes, I know.

FLORIOT Tell me man, tell me.

PERIS: I have not been instructed to tell you.

FLORIOT (rising coming C.) You surely don't refuse?

PERIS: (rising - backing C. away from FLORIOT. MERIVEL also rises) My....my client has not instructed me to....

FLORIOT You come from her? She is your client, what does she want, what are her wishes?

PERIS She wants the money she brought with her on her marriage.

FLORIOT Her dot.

PERIS 125,000 francs, she told me.

FLORIOT Yes that was the figure.

PERIS: She wants that sum refunded to her.

FLORIOT She would have had it years ago if I had known where to find her.

PERIS Then you will raise no difficulties?

FLORIOT None whatever. The money is hers.

PERIS: I will tell her what you say word for word.

FLORIOT (coming to chair L. of table L. C.) Give me her address so that I can go and see her at once.

PERIS: Mr President I must beg you to excuse me, but I have no authority from my client to give you her address.

FLORIOT But....

PERIS: I am only acting on instructions.

FLORIOT But what reason can she possibly have for refusing to see me?

PERIS: I don't know that she has any reason, but before giving you her address I must ask her permission.

FLORIOT Then you are going to see her?

PERIS: I shall write to her.

FLORIOT Is she far from here?

PERIS: No not very far.

MERIVEL (echoing) Not very far.

PERIS: I may tell you one thing, I think, without exceeding my professional duty.

FLORIOT Yes. (coming C. below table L. C.)

PERIS: May I count on your discretion?

FLORIOT Absolutely, you have my word for it.

PERIS: Mme Floriot is just now in er....a tight place.

MERIVEL (echoing) In a very tight place.

FLORIOT A --- I don't understand-----

PERIS: She is absolutely penniless.

(FLORIOT's hands rise and fall to his side - he goes up to sofa and sits. MERIVEL and PERISSARD exchange glances)

(coming up to R. of sofa) If you should care to send her any money? ---

FLORIOT Certainly, by all means.

PERIS: I will see that she gets it.

FLORIOT Immediately?

PERIS: Without a moment's delay.

FLORIOT (wiping his eyes) Gentlemen...you must excuse me.... when I think that she (rises)..without a penny. (he takes out his pocket book, and hands over bank-notes) Here are 400 francs. It's all that I have in my pocket just now. Send it her at once, will you not, and....

PERIS: I will send it her to-day. Allow me to give you a receipt.

FLORIOT Oh, that's of no matter. (goes up to fire R.)

MERIVEL Between men of honour.

PERIS: (going to table L. C.) Excuse me. (writes receipt) In matters of business --

(MERIVEL replaces chair and stands up L.)

([redacted]) When can I see you again Mr President. Will the day after to-morrow suit you?

FLORIOT Can you have an answer by then?

PERIS: I hope so.

FLORIOT I shall expect you in the morning. We can then go to her together.

PERIS: Count on me.

(WARNING. [redacted])

FLORIOT I need not ask you to be discreet need I? Nobody must know.

PERIS: (coming C.) Mr President I have not the honour of being known to you but remember these words. Whatever may happen we are engaged, my partner, I, and you yourself, to remain silent.

MERIVEL Silent as the tomb.

PERIS: And you may always reckon, always I repeat, on our entire discretion.

FLORIOT Gentlemen I thank you.

(Rings bell - ROSE appears R. C. NOEL ENTERS L. U.E)

PERIS: and MERIVEL Mr President, good morning.

(PERIS: goes out followed by MERIVEL)

(FLORIOT closes the door after them and comes down C)

FLORIOT Noel! Noel! Jacqueline lives!

NOEL She's alive! Who said so? (comes down L. of table L. C. goes to L. of FLORIOT)

FLORIOT Those two men. They came from her.

NOEL Where is she?

FLORIOT (Rises) I shall know to-morrow. I shall see her again. I shall take her home, and I will make her forget her years

of unhappiness and pay her back tenfold the joys which she has lost!

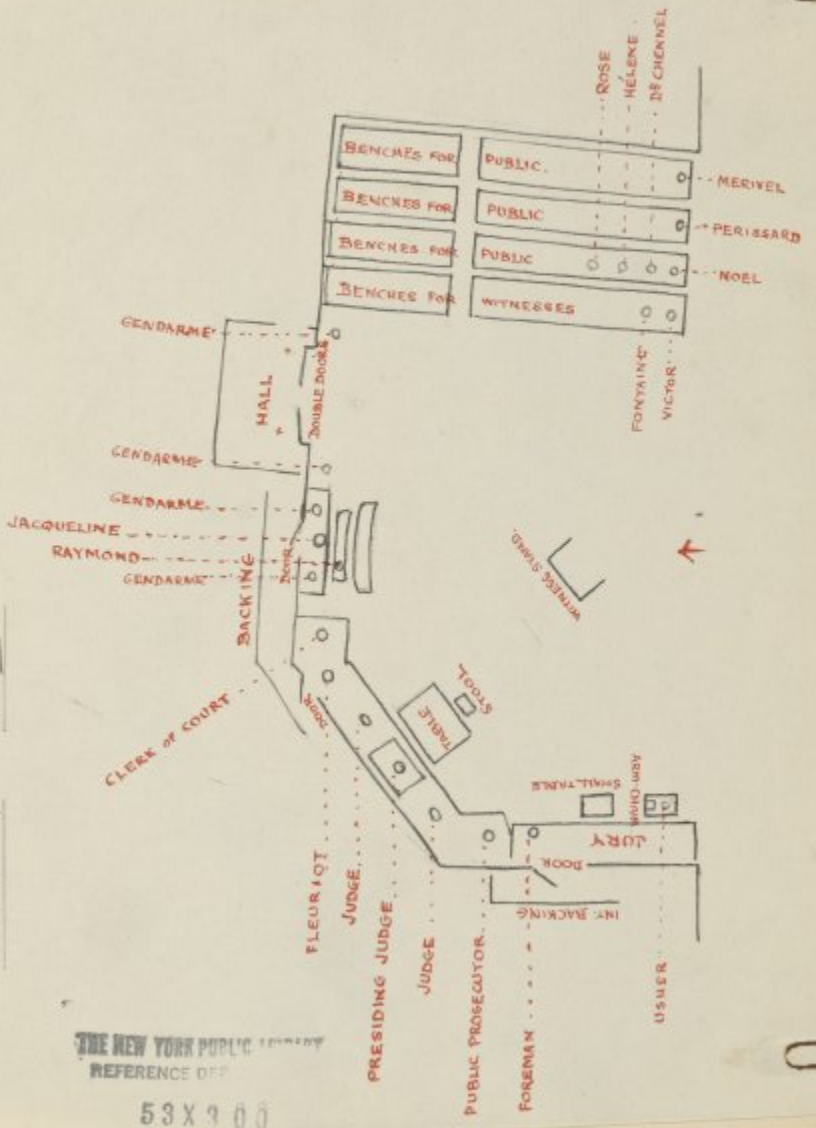
(ENTER RAYMOND R. C. at back)

RAYMOND (coming down C. to R. of FLORIOT) Why father what is the matter?

FLORIOT (turns up to RAY: at C.) Raymond, my son, a wonderful an immense happiness has fallen to your father's lot. I can tell you nothing yet but I am happy, very happy.

RAYMOND Father? (He puts his arm around FLORIOT)

C U R T A I N.



"MADAME X" ACT III.

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BEGINNERS. Mr Barnes - Brydone, - Wontner - Kelt - Branscombe -
Anson - Heggie - Ross - Harcourt - Gwenn (Extras)

Miss Ashwell - Bilbrooks - Chester - (Extras)

CALL - Mr Knox.

Medicine bottle and glass (off stage)
Revolver, books, documents (on table below judges)
Portmanteau(side of table below judges)
Jug of water and tumbler (Raymond's desk)
Gong (off stage)
Documents books etc - ink - pens.
Document for foreman of jury.
Book (Valmorin)

A C T III

SCENE - Court of Assizes.

(The Court consists of the Presiding Judge and his Two Colleagues, who sit on a raised platform to the right of the stage, facing the audience. Below and a little in front is the CLERK. To the right of the THREE JUDGES and at right angles to them, is the PUBLIC PROSECUTOR, VALMORIN - a little below him, the JURY. The dock is directly facing the audience. At the back of the stage and in front of the dock is RAYMOND, the Prisoner's lawyer. In front of the Judges is a table on which is the revolver with which Jacqueline shot Laroque. In front of this table the Bar, at which WITNESSES appear. To the left of the stage are benches on which are Witnesses and Members of the Public.)

(At the RISE of the CURTAIN, JACQUELINE, between two Gendarmes, is hiding her face in her handkerchief and crying. RAYMOND, in his lawyer's robes, is busied with his papers in his seat in front of and below her. VALMORIN, the Public Prosecutor, is in his place, and among the public are: PERISSARD, MERIVEL, NOEL DR CHENNEL and HELENE. At the RISE of the CURTAIN the trial is in full swing. The CLERK of the court is just finishing the reading of the charge against JACQUELINE)

CLERK .....In consequence of which, the woman, Laroque, is accused of having, on April 3rd 1909, at half past five in the afternoon, committed an act of voluntary homicide in room No 24, of the Hotel of the Three Crowns at Bordeaux, on the person of her lover, Frederic Laroque, a crime punishable by Articles 295 and 304 of the Penal Code.

PRES: Woman Laroque, you have heard the charge against you. You are accused of having comitted an act of voluntary homicide on the person of Frederic Laroque, your lover. What have you to say in your defence?

(Pause)

Do you admit that you are guilty of this crime?

(JACQUELINE remains silent)

You refuse to reply? You persist in keeping silent as you have kept silent since the Court opened, as you have kept silenceunder examination?

(Pause)

Let me beg of you, in your own interests, to speak. Your silence can only be harmful to your case.

(Pause)

You refuse to speak? (Pause) The matter is in the hands of the jury. You shall now hear the evidence against you. Clerk of the Court, call the first witness.

(FLORIOT ENTERS through a small door behind the JUDGES. CLERK calls "Victor Chouquet!" USHER rises, go out L. FLORIOT shakes hands with the JUDGES and takes a chair which has been reserved for him behind them and to the left)

HELENE (to DR CHENNEL) Poor woman! I am truly sorry for her.

PERIS: (to MERIVEL) What did I tell you?

MERIVEL — It has all been arranged.

PERIS: — Of course it has.

(GENDARME opens doors L, calls "Victor Chouquet!")

JACQUE — (staring at FLÜRIOT, aside) I can hardly believe my eyes. What is he doing here?

DR C: — (to HELENE) What do you think of Raymond in his lawyer's robes?

HELENE — Doesn't he look handsome?

JACQUE: — (over edge of dock to RAYMOND) Excuse me, sir! What is the name of that gentleman talking to the Judges?

RAYMOND — President Flüriot, from Toulouse.

(She starts - RAYMOND turns towards her)

Believe me, Madam, your silence may lose your case for you.

(OFF STAGE "Victor Chouquet")

Let me entreat you to speak.

JACQUE: — I know what I must do.

RAYMOND — You are wrong not to take my advice. (He sits down)

JACQUE: — So it is he, at last!

(The USHER RE-ENTERS with VICTOR, who goes up to the witness bar in the centre)

PRES: — (to VICTOR) State your name, surname, age, and profession.

VICTOR — Chouquet, Victor Emanuel, 29 years of age, Boots at the Hotel of The Three Crowns.

PRES: — Where do you live?

VICTOR — At the Hotel, -- President.

PRES: — You are no relation of the prisoner, or in any way attached to her service?

VICTOR — No, -- President.

PRES: — Raise your right hand. Do you swear to speak without hatred or without fear, to tell the truth and the whole truth Say "I swear it!"

VICTOR — I swear it.

PRES: — Put down your hand. Give your evidence.

VICTOR — On April 3rd -

(ENTER ROSE, who sits next to HELENE)

GENDARME — Sh! Sh!

VICTOR — On April 3rd, a man and a woman arrived at the Hotel -

PRES: — What time was it?

VICTOR — About half past four in the afternoon.

PRES: — Turn to the Jury and go on.

VICTOR The two travellers had a trunk and a bag. I took them up to room 24 on the second floor, and the man as he went into the room said, 'Not a palace, is it?' The woman said 'Oh, what does it matter - this room or another?' to which the man replied 'Well, I don't suppose we shall be here for long.' Then they asked me for absinthe and cigarettes which I got for them, and they asked me to leave the bottle.

PRESS: Did they drink much?

VICTOR I didn't notice.

PRESS: What was the attitude of the woman?

VICTOR She had none with her.

(Laughter)

PRESS: Silence, please. By attitude, I mean did she look happy, sad, calm, or nervous?

VICTOR She looked very tired.

PRESS: Go on.

VICTOR Some time afterwards, my wife went up to their room with the register, and took down their names. They were given as Monsieur and Madame Laroque, from Buenos Aires, on their way to Paris.

PRESS: Your wife was at the hotel?

VICTOR Yes, she was chambermaid there.

PRESS: Why has she not been called as a witness?

(PUBLIC PROSECUTOR half rises)

VICTOR — (much moved) Because she's not there any longer. On the evening after the crime, she left me, and I have not seen her since. A few days after she had gone, she wrote me a note in which she said "Don't worry about me, I am very happy! Take care of the child." (He wipes his eyes)

ROSE — (to HELSON) Poor man!

PRES: — Finish your evidence.

VICTOR — At about half past five I was taking water to the rooms on the floor above no. 24. I heard shots fired. I rushed downstairs and found M.Laroque lying on the ground at the feet of his wife, who held a smoking revolver in her hand. I took the revolver from her and held her tightly.

PRES: — Did she say anything?

VICTOR — She said 'There's no hurry. I shan't try to get away.' Then the police came and took her off.

PRES: — That's all you know?

VICTOR — Yes, President.

PRES: — The prisoner is the woman you call Madame Laroque, is she?

VICTOR — (turns to JACQUE:) Yes, President.

PRES: — (to JACQUE:) Prisoner, have you anything to say with regard to the evidence you have just heard? You insist on keeping silence?

JACQUE: Wait but a little time, a little time! (threateningly)

(NOEL starts and draws DR C's attention to JACQUE - All turn to look at JACQUE)

PRES: Gentlemen of the Jury, have you any questions that you wish to put to the witness?

FOREMAN No thank you, President.

PRES: (He turns towards Valmorin) Mr Prosecutor?

VALMORIN Thank you, no.

PRES: (to RAYMOND) Has the counsel for the defence anything to ask the witness?

RAYMOND (Getting up) The witness has mentioned the fact that my client had been drinking absinthe. I should like to know whether he considers that she was intoxicated?

PRES: (to VICTOR) You hear the question? Was the prisoner drunk or sober when you ran into the room and found her with the revolver in her hand?

(RAYMOND leans forward)

VICTOR She was very much excited, President, there's no doubt about that. Her eyes were wild, her face was flushed, and she did not seem to know quite just what she was doing.

RAMOND (indicates) That is all (and sits)

PRES: You may stand down. Clerk of the Court, call the second witness.

CLERK (calls) Casimir Fontaine.

(USHER goes out L.)

(VICTOR sits down on the witnesses' bench in front of the benches reserved for the public)

PERIS: (to MERIVEL) It seems to be going pretty quickly, doesn't it?

(GENDARME calls "Casimir Fontaine.")

NOEL (to DR C:) Our young friend, Raymond, is distinctly good.

ROSE (to HELENE) You are nervous?

HELENE Terribly nervous.

VOICE OFF (calling) Casimir Fontaine.

(FONTAINE's voice is heard outside "Here!" FONTAINE is a policeman in uniform, with a strong southern accent. This can best be represented by the English or American actor by rolling the R's and speaking jerkily and sharply. FONTAINE ENTERS, goes to the Bar and salutes. USHER returns)

PRES: Your name, Christian name, age and profession.

FONTAINE Fontaine, Casimir John Marie Augustus; 31 years of age, Sergeant of the town.

PRES : Where do you live?

FONTAINE 9 Impasse Jolivet.

PRES: You are not related to the prisoner, or in any way attached to her service?

FONTAINE No, President.

PRES: Raise your right hand - You swear to speak without hatred and without fear, to tell the truth and all the truth. Say "I swear it."

FONTAINE I swear it.

PRES: Put down your hand. Give your evidence.

FONTAINE On April 3rd about half past five in the afternoon, I was on duty in the Rue St Catherine in place of a comrade who had leave to attend his sister's wedding. I was giving a piece of my mind to a dog which had just been run over by a cab -

(Laughter in court, which is silenced by the USHER)

- when the waiter from the hotel of the Three Crowns told me that a murder had been committed. I followed him to the Hotel. There in a room on the second floor I found the body of a man weltering in his blood. He had just been killed with a revolver by his wife.

(PRESIDENT signals to USHER, who takes the revolver from table below JUDGES and hands it to the FOREMAN)

The woman was standing over the body. Her arms were held tight by the hotel servants. I took her by the arm and got her away.

PRES: Did she say anything to you while you were taking her off?

FONTAINE I did most of the talking myself.

(Laughter - silenced by USHER)

I asked her why she had killed Laroque, and she said she has done so to prevent him from doing a disgraceful thing,

which would have caused unhappiness and despair to somebody she loved. I tried to make her say more, but she wouldn't. She said that she wouldn't say another word to anybody, and she didn't.

(JURY hand revolver back to USHER who replaces it)

PRES: Is that all you know?

FONTAINE Yes, President.

PRES: The prisoner is the woman you arrested, is she not?

FONTAINE (After looking at JACQUE:) Undoubtedly, President.

PRES : Prisoner, have you any observation to make with regard to the evidence given by the witness?

(JACQUELINE does not move)

Has anybody any questions to ask the witness?

(A pause)

You may stand down.

(FONTAINE goes and sits next to VICTOR)

MERIVEL (to PERISSARD) Are there no other witnesses?

PERIS: No, these are the only two.

PRES: (to JACQUE:) Before calling on the Public Prosecutor, I ask you for the last time, prisoner, in your own interest, to tell the Jury why you committed this crime? You told the policeman who arrested you, and who has just given evidence, that you killed Laroque to prevent him from committing an infamous and abominable deed, which would have caused trouble to somebody whom you loved. To what deed did you allude? - (PAUSE) To whom would it have brought trouble? - (PAUSE) Discovery

(PAUSE)

of the reasons which caused you to commit the murder may largely influence the verdict? ¥ You refuse to speak? -(PAUSE) You have made up your mind to say nothing?

(A pause)

Mr Public Prosecutor?

PERIS: (to MERIVEL) And there we are. The case is practically over.

VALMORIN (rising, settling his sleeves and putting his toque on the desk before him) Gentlemen of the Jury, I shall not keep you very long. The crime on which you have to give your verdict is simple and banal. This woman has killed her lover that is definitely proved. But who is this woman? What is her real name? Who is she? Where does she come from? We do not know. Since her arrest, the prisoner has refused to answer all questions that have been put to her. She has not vouchsafed a single syllable in reply to the examining magistrate, and you have seen for yourselves that here in Court she has insisted on remaining obstinately silent, although her silence is harmful to her case. There is sometimes an explanation of a murder, if not an excuse for it, to be found in the motives which inspired it. Murders are committed for money, for love, from jealousy, or by thirst for vengeance, and the passion which arms the criminal's hand, which disturbs her reason, and which makes her act without thinking, may, to some extent, diminish her responsibility, and the horror which the act of murder makes every just man feel. When one or other of these reasons, are brought forward, justice may be tempered with mercy, But how can you be asked to find excuses for an act, the motives for which the prisoner refuses to disclose. If she refuses to disclose them, we may be forgiven for believing that they are the very worst motives. I, for my part, distrust the impenetrable mystery in which the prisoner has robed herself, and I can feel no pity for a guilty woman from whose lips we have heard no single word of repentance.

JACQUE: (forcibly) I will speak presently, I tell you.

(Sensation in court)

DR C: (to NOEL) It's getting interesting (aside to NOEL)

MERIVE: (to PERISSARD) Do you think she will speak?

PERIS: Of course not.

USHER Silence in the Court.

JACQUE: I will speak presently. You shan't wait long

VALMORIN I was saying, Gentlemen of the Jury, that we know nothing about the woman Laroque, and our information about her is of the scantiest. We have found no proof of the prisoner's past life in France. In Buenos Aires it is not known where she had come from. During her stay in South America, she did not, so far as we can find out, offend in any way against the laws of the country. In the month of March she took her passage on board the "Amazon" for Bordeaux. Nothing particular was remarked about her during the passage, except that she told the fortunes of a number of passengers with cards during the trip, that she expressed herself as certain that she would die before long, and that she was in a great hurry to get back to France. This is all that we know about her past. (Referring to his papers) On April 3rd, about half past four in the evening, she arrived, at the Hotel of The Three Crowns, and at half past five, she killed her lover, a man whose past will not bear scrutiny, and who had been sentenced for theft on two separate occasions by the Paris Courts. You have heard the evidence of the Boots with reference to the over-excitement of the prisoner. I will draw no conclusion from this evidence, nor will I go into the question of the prisoner's moral responsibility, which over excitement caused by drugs may have affected. To dwell upon these points lies rather within the province of my friend, the counsel for the defence, Maitre Raymond Floriot.

(JACQUELINE shrieks aloud - she sobs pitifully, some of the crowd rise to look at the dock)

HELIOS (to DR C:) Doctor, she's going to faint.

DR C: No, no, my dear - no, no.

RAYMOND (Turning and looking at JACQUE) Is there anything wrong, madame? You look very ill.

JACQUE No, no, it's nothing.

(She lets her hand drop on RAYMOND'S and then clasps his hand, looking at him greedily)

RAYMOND Shall I ask for an adjournment?

JACQUE: No, no, thanks - I am better now.

(RAYMOND sits down. JACQUELINE sobs)

RAYMOND (to himself) Poor woman!

MERIVEL (to PERISSARD) What does it all mean?

USHER Silence in the Court! Silence in the Court!

VALMORIN As for the reason of the crime, I repeat that we do not know it. Now that the prisoner has promised us to speak at last, we may learn what it was.

(JACQUE: sobs)

You, Gentlemen of the Jury, will weigh in the balance with her guilt the sincerity of her repentance, and you will let your consciences be judge of what punishment is proportionate to the crime she has committed. (He resumes his seat)

(A hum in court at the close of the speech.)

(JACQUE sobs)

PERIS : (to MERIVEL) I don't think much of Mr Public Prosecutor.

USHER Silence in the Court!

PRES: Woman Laroque, will you answer my questions now?

JACQUE (sobbing) Oh, no, no!

PRES: You said a few minutes ago that you would speak.

JACQUE: (sobbing) Oh, never, never!

PRES: Take time for reflection, and let me for the last time advise you not to remain obstinate.

(A pause)

Counsel for the Defence!

JACQUE Oh! If I could only but die here, now!

RAYMOND (rises, throws back the sleeves of his gown, picking up his brief, looks at JACQUE: and speaks) Gentlemen of the Jury, I will not try to conceal the very real emotion which I feel. My wish is to be cool and to keep calm, but my eyes are filled with tears in spite of all my efforts. My heart is beating more quickly than its wont, my voice is trembling, and it is all that I can do to keep from breaking down and crying like a child, instead of pleading for my client, here before you. I crave your indulgence for this weakness, but it does not make me blush. It is the first time in my life that I have come into close contact with the bitterness of a woman's misery and grief, and my heart is torn by the fear that I shall prove unequal to the noble task which I have undertaken (throws his brief on his desk) I can find none of the arguments which I had pre-

pared for the purpose of moving and convincing you, and my ready made phrases have vanished from my brain, dispersed by one glance at the suffering and distress of this poor woman.

(ROSE begins to sob - HELENE is affected)

Look at her, gentlemen; no words of mine will be of such effect in moving you to mercy as must be her tears.

JACQUE (sobbing) My boy, my boy!

RAYMOND And there is a mystery, a veil of mystery, which has not been torn by the evidence, around this woman for whom I am pleading to you. Who is this weeping and despairing woman? - Where does she come from - and why did she kill the man with whom she lived? We do not know. She alone can rend this veil which enshrouds her case, and she refuses to do so. She alone knows the secret, and she keeps it. Why? So as to mislead the course of Justice? Certainly not. For, if that were her object, she would speak, she would try to justify her crime, she would lie so as to appear innocent she would find some plausible reason for the murder of her lover. Many such reasons can be found. A quarrel, violence on her lover's part, momentary madness: nobody could give her the lie, for nobody was present when the murder was committed: nobody heard or saw what happened immediately before it, and Laroque, the only person in the room besides the prisoner, is dead. But my client has disdained all subterfuge; she knew perfectly well what the consequences of her act would be, and she has not tried to escape them. "There's no hurry," she said to the Boots of the Hotel, who wrenched the revolver from her hand; "There's no hurry! I shan't try to get away." And since then she has remained silent. Why? Her own words will tell us why, gentlemen, and will lift a corner of the veil which hides the truth from us. The policeman who arrested her has told us that he asked the prisoner why she killed Laroque, and that she answered: "I killed him to prevent him from doing an infamous and shameful thing, which would have brought misfortune and despair on someone whom I love." This, gentlemen, tells us the secret of this poor creature. She killed this man, Laroque, of whose past, as my friend the Public Prosecutor rightly said, no good was known, she

killed this man, who has on two occasions undergone punishment for theft, and who was capable of anything, she killed him because taking his life was the only way in which she could prevent an infamy which would have brought shame and despair on somebody she loved. Does not this explain the insistency of her silence? which otherwise we might not understand? This woman, this poor creature, who has been beaten down to the very lowest rungs of the ladder of physical and moral misery. this wretched creature LOVES. Good women may sweep their skirts away from her touch in the streets, but love is in her heart and the happiness of him or her whom she loves, is dearer to her than her own life. One day she sees a menace to this happiness and kills! Kills without hesitation, the scoundrel who was going to destroy that happiness. Love was the motive that made her a criminal, love, and love only. And whom does she love to the sacrifice of herself? Is it a father who is respected and honoured by all in his old age? Is it a husband or a lover to whom she has been false and whom she left long years ago? Is it a child who knows nothing of his mother's shame and lives unconscious and happy?

(JACQUELINE bursts into sobs)

We do not know, but some such love is no doubt the secret of my client, and the true reason of her silence. She cares nothing for what men may say of her, not for men's judgment of her. There is only one living being of importance to her in the world. She does not care for her own life and sacrifices it with gladness, but she will not let herself be known. She will not let her name be mentioned so that her picture shall remain unstained, untarnished, in the heart of the one living creature whom she worships. Gentlemen of the Jury, a woman who can feel like this is no vulgar criminal and I feel sure that I shall prove to your satisfaction that it is no vulgar criminal who stands before you. (Pause - he refers to a document) The police have moved heaven and earth to find out her identity, and they have failed. This, of itself, is a sufficient proof that this crime is her first, for had she ever been convicted, the police would have found traces of her former conviction. And there is no doubt, gentlemen, that a man was originally responsible for my client's fall from grace. When a woman falls and rolls into the gutter, it is not with

her that we should feel indignant, it is not at her wounded breast that we should throw the stone. A man has done this thing, a man who has seduced her, or ill treated her. He is a lover without scruple, or a husband with too little nobility of character, and too much pride. A husband who has not known how to pity, and who has sentenced his wife, for a first fall, to a whole life of wretchedness and sin. The laws of man take no effect against such a lover or such a husband, but God sees him, and judges him. Such a man has made this woman what you see her to-day, and he alone is responsible. He, no doubt, lives happily, his name is respected and his conscience is calm. But in the eyes of Eternal Justice this man stands by this woman's side, or even lower still, to-day.

(ROSE sobs)

And in the name of natural honesty, in the name of your mothers and sisters, I call upon you to do justice tempered with pity to this woman whose life has been the plaything of the man who should stand in her place.

FLORIOT (aside) Cruel, cruel!

RAYMOND In the course of his eloquent speech for the prosecution, my friend reminded us that murder might sometimes be worthy of forgiveness, and that the wave of passion which causes a murder to be done sometimes excuses it. Gentlemen, I ask you on your consciences, is this woman guilty? Does she deserve punishment for having wiped out of existence the pestilent criminal who was threatening the happiness of the one person whom she loved? Does this unfortunate woman deserve punishment for the silence she has kept so heroically, so as to save her name from scandal, for the sake of another whom she loves? No, gentlemen, a thousand times no. At the mere thought my heart cries out in protest. And you will share, I know, gentlemen, my ardent conviction on the point. Gentlemen of the Jury, my case is a just one, and your verdict will bear wit-

VICTOR (pointing to PERISSARD and MERIVEL) There are two men in Court who probably know a good deal .... About the murder.

PRES: What do you mean?

VICTOR (pointing to PERISSARD & MERIVEL again) Those two men over there -

(A general movement to see PERI: & MER:)

- came to the hotel and asked for M■·Laroque before the boat came in. They came back and saw him after his arrival, and I took them up to room 24; M■·Laroque and they remained together for a good half hour. Then I saw him go out with them and he came back a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes before the crime was committed.

PRES: This is important.

PERIS: What a damned fool!

PRES: Have you anything else to say?

VICTOR No, sir.

(USHER motions VICTOR to sit down again)

PRES: Usher, bring these two men to the bar. I have discretionary power to question them as witnesses, although they have not been previously cited, and I will use it.

(USHER comes to L for PERISSARD & MERIVEL)

PERIS: (to MERIVEL) For pity's sake, be careful. Keep your mouth shut.

MERIVEL Don't you worry. I won't say a word.

USHER (to PERISSARD & MERIVEL) Gentlemen, if you please.

(THEY come to C.)

PRES: (to the USHER) Let one of them step forward and take the other to the waiting room.

(PERISSARD steps forward to the witness bar and the USHER takes MERIVEL out)

(EXIT MERIVEL and USHER L.U.E. - USHER returns)

PRES: (to PERISSARD) Your name and Christian name?

PERIS: (smiling and nodding to Fleriot) Perissard, Robert Henri.

PRES: Your age?

PERIS: 59 years.

PRES: Your profession?

PERIS: Commission agent.

PRES: Your address?

PERIS : 29 Rue Mogador, Paris.

PRES: Tell us what you know about the murder of Laroque?

PERIS: I don't know anything at all about it, President. I know absolutely nothing, and I cannot understand.....

PRES: Did you know Laroque?

PERIS: I used to know him years ago in Paris. About six months ago I got a letter from him asking me for work. I offered him a place in my office, and I went to meet him when he arrived - that's all.

PRES: Did you come from Paris to Bordeaux on purpose to see him?

(A slight murmur in court)

PERIS: No, President. I had come to Bordeaux to start a branch here of my Paris house.

PRES: And is that the reason of your coming here to-day?

(A murmur in court)

PERIS: (slowly, looking fixedly at FLORIOT) No, President, I came to Bordeaux yesterday from Toulouse, on a special matter of business, the business of one of my clients, a very delicate affair. It concerns the honour of a well known family, and I hope to carry it through successfully, I am honourably known in my profession, and my clients know that they can always reckon - I repeat, can always reckon on - on my entire discretion.

PRES: What did you say to Laroque in the course of your conversation with him?

PERIS: Nothing much. It was a business talk, and I gave him a few general directions about the work of my office, that is all.

PRES: You don't know why he was killed?

PERIS Not in the least.

PRES: Do you know the prisoner?

PERIS: (after looking at JACQUE:) I saw her with Laroque, but I do not know who she is.

JACQUE: (rising and pointing at him) But I know you! You are the real cause of the murder!

(Sensation in court)

PERIS : I!

JACQUE: Yes. You found out that I was married and that I had left my husband, and you advised Laroque to find him and to ask him for the money which I brought him on my marriage.

FLORIOT (staring at her) Then it really is she?

PERIS : President, Laroque told me during our conversation that his wife had had typhoid fever last year, and that her brain had suffered.

JACQUE: I nearly died last year, and my head was shaved. (She looks at FLORIOT) That is why those who used to know me cannot recognise me now.

FLORIOT (half to himself) Jacqueline! Jacqueline!

NOEL (to DR C:) It's his wife. I am certain of it. It's Jacqueline.

JACQUE: (to Perissard) But I am not mad. I begged and prayed Laroque not to follow your hateful advice and as he refused to listen to me, as I would not run the risk of his seeing and speaking to my son, I killed -

(HELENE gives a cry)

- the scoundrel (She sits down again)

ROSE — Great Heaven!

NOEL — (very much moved) Poor Jacqueline!

PRES: — (to PERIS:) You may go.

(VALMORIN leans over to PRESIDENT)

PERIS : — (with a sigh of relief) Phew! (is going towards door L U E)

PRES: — Call the other witness! ,

(EXIT USHER L.U.E.)

VALMORIN — (to Perissard, who is going) No, Perissard, do not leave the Court, if you please. We may want you again.

PERIS: — The Presiding Judge said that I could go, and I have important business.

VALMORIN — And I ask you to stay. Kindly sit down.

PERIS: — (sitting down and grumbling) (L end of front bench) I really don't understand. It's disgraceful! I was not regularly cited according to Article 313 of the code of Criminal Instruction.

PRES: — Sit down please.

PERIS: — It's a shame!

(The USHER brings MERIVEL to the bar)

PRES: — Your name and christian name?

MERIVEL — Merivel, Modeste Hippolyte.

PRES: — Your age?

PRES: Your age?

MERIVEL 52.

PRES: Your profession?

MERIVEL Commission agent.

PRES: Your address?

MERIVEL 4 Rue Rossini, Paris.

PRES : What do you know about the murder of Laroque?

MERIVEL Nothing, President.

PRES: Nothing?

MERIVEL Nothing whatever.

PRES: Did you know Laroque?

MERIVEL No, President.

(Murmuring in court)

PRES: Have you never seen him?

MERIVEL Never! (Turns round to look at PERISSARD smiling)

PERIS: (fiercely, aside) Idiot!

PRES: You did not go and see him in his room at the Three Crowns' Hotel on April 3rd.

MERIVEL — No, President.

(Laughter in court, silenced by USHER)

PRES : — Be careful - the hotel people saw you.

MERIVEL — They must have made a mistake.

PERIS : — (fiercely) The man's a perfect fool.

VALMORIN — (rising) President, the attitude of these two men is distinctly suspicious,

(PERISSARD rises)

and in virtue of Article 330 of the Code of Criminal Instruction, I ask you to order their immediate arrest for perjury.

(Sensation)

PERIS: — (jumping up) It isn't my fault if that fool -

MERIVEL — Who are you calling a fool?

PRES: — Gendarmes, remove those two men.

(GENDARMES come forward)

MERIVEL — I protest.

(GENDARME pushes him up stage L.C.)

(PERISSARD advances to JUDGE, GENDARME pushes him off up L)

PERIS: — You have no right to do this. It is perfectly -

PRES: — Take them away!

MERIVEL I will have my revenge.

PERIS: Shut your mouth, you damned idiot!

MERIVEL I'll write to the papers. I -

(GENDARMES take out Perissard and Merivel)

FONTAINE (to Victor) A pretty pair of scoundrels!

VICTOR I believe you.

HELENE (to ROSE) What's the matter, Rose?

ROSE Oh, it's nothing. It's my nerves.

USHER Silence, please. Silence in the Court!

PRES: (to Jacqueline) Prisoner, have you anything to say in your defence? Tell the truth - the whole truth.

JACQUE: (standing between the two Gendarmes) My Counsel has said all that could be said. I shall never forget his words, and I thank him from the bottom of my heart. He is right, I was not naturally bad. A coward broke my heart, and made me what I have become. I had wronged him, I admit, but I was sorry for it, and hated myself for my fault. I begged him for his forgiveness, begged him for it on my knees, but he was pitiless, and he told me to go. He threw me out into the street: I, his wife, the mother of his child. Thanks to him, I rolled into the gutter, thanks to him I have suffered a thousand deaths, and now I have taken human life. I hate him! I hate him! And with my last breath I will curse his name!

(JACQUE: staggers. RAYMOND gives her water. FLORIOT makes a movement to go out, but is restrained by Judges)

JACQUE: And yet, I do not complain, no, I do not complain. I have a son, a son whom I love, whom I love more than I can ever say.

(ROSE sobs)

He does not know me! The sound of my voice, thank God, can awaken no echo in his heart. He will never see me again, he will know nothing of my shame, and his memory of me will be sweet and beautiful, for when I became lost to him he was a child. He is so far from me now, but I love him! I worship him! My heart is all his and my one wish is that he may be happy. (She drops into her seat and cries)

PRES: Gentlemen of the Jury, you have to answer this question. Is the prisoner guilty of the murder committed on April 3rd on the body of Frederic Laroque? If the majority of you believe that there are extenuating circumstances for the prisoner's deed, you are to give your verdict in these words:- "The majority of the Jury consider that there were extenuating circumstances in favour of the prisoner". Your vote will be given in privacy. Kindly withdraw to the Jury room, the Court is rising.

(The JURY MEN go out, so do the PUBLIC PROSECUTOR - VALMORIN - the PRESIDENT, the JUDGES, the CLERK of the COURT and the USHER. FLORIOT goes out with VALMORIN, JACQUELINE goes out with the TWO GENDARMES, the ON-LOOKERS go out as do VICTOR and FONTAINE. NOEL comes R C below witness stand followed by DR CHENNEL - ROSE going up C watching JACQUELINE)

HELENE Are you going out, Rose?

ROSE Yes, I must have air. I am suffocated. Poor things, poor things!

(She goes out. HELENE goes with her)

DR C: (to NOEL) Poor woman!

(RAYMOND goes to evidence table)

NOEL — Ah! if you had only known her as I knew her, with her youth, her graces! -

DR C: — Be careful! - here's her boy.

RAYMOND — (has arranged his papers and comes C between Noel and DR CHANNEL) Do you think she will get off, Doctor?

DR C: — I hope so, and if she does, she may thank you, my boy.

RAYMOND — Really! I thought I was awfully bad.

NOEL — (shaking Raymond by the hand) I thought you were magnificent.

RAYMOND — (laughing) Oh, come now.

NOEL — No, I mean it. You moved me deeply, and not only me.

RAYMOND — It is awfully good of you to say this, and I am very proud of one thing. Do you know that I made father cry? I did really. The man of bronze, as I have heard him called, cry. I knew where he was sitting, and I kept an eye on him from time to time without appearing to. But I was nervous. Just at the beginning I did not know what to do at all. That poor woman regularly upset me. You remember when she called out and nearly fainted?

NOEL — Yes. You turned round, looked up at her and spoke to her.

RAYMOND — Exactly. I put my hand on the edge of the rail and she got hold of it and squeezed it so that I nearly lost my thread. She looked down at me in the most extraordinary way. She drew me towards her somehow, I do not know how to explain it to you -

(coming to NOEL who turns away, then to DR C:)

I wanted to take her in my arms and kiss her, yes, kiss her. Isn't it silly? Queer sort of lawyer who would kiss his clients in court, eh? But I swear that is what I did want to do. It is one of the most extraordinary sensations I have ever felt.

(FLORIOT ENTERS at back and is coming down C)

and it upset me so that I caught myself talking for a full minute without knowing what I was saying and I am awfully glad that it is all over. Ah, here's the guv'nor! (turns up to FLORIOT)

FLORIOT — (coming between Raymond and Noel) (in a broken voice) Thank you, my son, thank you. You are a good fellow!

RAYMOND — Is anything the matter? (puts his arm round FLORIOT)

NOEL — (to FLORIOT) Come along! Don't stay there, come, come!

(RAYMOND goes up to CHENNEL)

DR C: — Come with me.

FLORIOT — No, no, I want - I want to - (catches hold of first bench)

(Three bells are heard

(RE-ENTER USHER and CLERK)

RAYMOND — The Court is coming in again.

NOEL — Already! The Jury has not taken long.

RAYMOND — That is a good sign, isn't it, father?

(ENTER HELENE and ROSE - RAYMOND goes to them)

FLORIOT — (to Noel) You recognised her, of course? There's no doubt about it, it is she, and this is what she has become. This is my work ! My poor Jacqueline!

NOEL — Sh! Sh! (sits on bench behind FLORIOT)

(The court gradually fills)

HELENE — (to Raymond) Raymond, you were splendid - so eloquent and so touching!

RAYMOND — Really, you are pleased?

HELENE — I am so proud of you.

(ENTER JURY)

USHER — Gentlemen, the Court!

(ALL have risen)

(The PRESIDENT takes his seat with the JUDGES on either side of him. All the rest resume their places)

FLORIOT — (to Noel) This is fearful!

NOEL — Do not lose heart.

PRES: — Gentlemen of the Jury, kindly give your verdict.

(The Foreman of the Jury rises and puts his hand upon his heart)

FOREMAN — On my honour and my conscience, before God and before men, the declaration of the Jury is, No, the Prisoner is not guilty.

(Sensation in Court. Rose looks towards Floriot. Cheers, silenced by USHER)

FLORIOT (to Noel) Acquitted -

(The foreman of the jury passes the declaration to the Usher who takes it to the President of the Court who signs it and passes it on to the Usher to takes it to the Clerk and returns to his seat)

PRES: Bring in the prisoner.

HELENE (to ROSE) She is acquitted, how happy I am!

ROSE Poor thing! What will become of her now?

(JACQUELINE is brought into the dock between the two gendarmes)

FLORIOT (to Noel) Look at her, Noel, how she has suffered!

DR C: (rising) She is dangerously ill.

PRES: Clerk of the Court, read the declaration of the Jury.

CLERK The declaration of the Jury is, No -

(JACQUELINE sways - Gendarme puts his arm out to her but she refuses it)

The prisoner is not guilty. In consequence, the Court proclaims the prisoner's innocence of the crime of which she is accused, orders her acquittal, and orders that she be immediately set at liberty if there be no other reason for her detention.

PRES: The audience is over.

(ALL rise)

JACQUE: (in a state of wild excitement) No, no, I want - I want -

let me die - I want to die - I want to die! (She goes into violent hysterics)

FLORIOT (to DR C:) For God's sake, Doctor, help her!

(The crowd rush shouting and cheering towards JACQUK)

(FLORIOT, NOEL and DR CHENNEL rush to the dock. DR C writes a prescription then hurries to R and gets Usher's chair to C.)

PRES: Clear the Court!

(GENDARMES clear the Court - Jacqueline is brought down stage and given a chair)

(Judges, Jury etc go out)

DR C: (to the Gendarmes) Put her on this chair! - gently, now. (to Gendarme) Have this prescription made up at once.

(EXIT Gendarmes)

(NOEL comes down L.C. RAYMOND and FLORIOT also)

NOEL (FLEUR. COMES TO L. OF JACQ - NOEL TO L. OF FLEUR & RAY TO L OF NOEL) DR CH. R. OF JACQ. She's coming to.

DR C: But she is terribly exhausted.

RAYMOND ([redacted]) Poor woman.

FLORIOT (to DR C:) Is there no hope?

DR C: None whatever, I'm afraid.

FLORIOT Poor thing! Poor thing!

NOEL I think she moved, doctor.

DR C: Yes, she's coming to. (to FLORIOT) Give her air, Floriot old man - no stand behind her. She mustn't see you when she opens her eyes

(FLORIOT and NOEL go up above JACQUE: L of chair)

GENDARME ENTERS with medicine, puts it on Usher's table and EXIT L U E)

RAYMOND (surprised) Why not?

NOEL (to Floriot) The doctor is right. We will go out and come back again presently (is going up L C) (with Floriot)

FLORIOT Raymond, come with me, my boy.

(FLORIOT and RAYMOND go out - NOEL comes back but DR C: motions him away and he goes out)

DR C: (giving her medicine - puts glass back on Usher's table and comes L of Jacque: to Jacqueline) How do you feel now?

JACQUE Very ill. I feel so weak and so....(suddenly) But my boy is here (wildly) He mustn't see me! Let me go! I must go away at once - I - (she half rises and falls back) Oh, God! I can't! I can't!

(DR C: catches her helps her into chair again)

DR C: You will be better presently.

JACQUE Are you a doctor?

DR C: (L of Jacque) Yes. I am a friend of Raymond's - of your son's.

JACQUE: You know, then?

DR C: Yes.

JACQUE: Doctor, he must never know. Promise.

DR C: On my word of honour.

(SHE collapses)

JACQUE: Doctor, I believe I am going to die.

DR C: No! No! You are a little weak, that's all.

JACQUE: Ah! If I only could....

(She sinks back. DR C: going to Usher's table hears Raymond enter - RAYMOND comes in deeply moved, but trying to control himself) (coming down to L.C.)

DR C: (sees him and says) You know?

RAYMOND Yes, Father has just told me.

DR C: Be very careful - a strong emotion may be too much for her.

RAYMOND Yes, yes, I will control myself.

(JACQUE: commences to revive. DR C: goes to R of her, RAYMOND to L.)

She shan't know. (brightly to JACQUE:) Well, are you better?

(JACQUE half rises, DR C: gives RAYMOND a warning movement)

I didn't want to leave the Court without asking how you were and thanking you.

JACQUE: Thanking me - you?

RAYMOND Yes! I owe my first success to you. To-day has brought me the greatest joy of my whole life. Tell me that you are glad.

JACQUE (looking at him) Yes, I am glad - very glad.

(RAYMOND goes up R gets stool brings it down below L of Jacqueline)

RAYMOND May I sit down by your side for a minute if it does not tire you?

JACQUE: Oh! you won't tire me.

(RAYMOND sits down next to her, DR C: going out above Jacque: signs to Raymond and goes out quietly)

RAYMOND Before I go, don't you think we might have a little chat? You have not spoilt me much in this respect, have you? You are my first client, [redacted]

JACQUE: [redacted]

RAYMOND [redacted]

JACQUE: [redacted]

RAYMOND: [redacted]

JACQUE: [redacted]

and

RAYMOND [redacted], I felt the deepest sympathy for you from the first.

JACQUE — For me?

RAYMOND — Yes, I wanted to convince you that you had in me, not only a Counsel, but also a friend - a true and sincere friend.

JACQUE: — Oh, if I had only known -

RAYMOND — I made myself a promise that I would win your case for you, and you see I succeeded. Now you are free - free to go to the son whom you love so dearly. Promise me that you will not forget me altogether.

JACQUE: — Forget you - forget you -

RAYMOND — Your memory will always be with me - I promise you that.

JACQUE — (struggles up to her feet) I must go away - I must go away.

(She is going R then falls back, RAYMOND has risen and catching her puts her very gently in the chair again)

Oh, no, I cannot! (She clasps her hands) Great God! not to be able to say....and never to see him again....never... (to RAYMOND) [redacted] -

RAYMOND — (sitting on stool) Give me your hand.

(She gives it to him)

Do you remember during the trial you took my hand? You pressed it. I felt then an overwhelming [redacted] longing to take you in my arms, [redacted] and [redacted] kiss you.

JACQUE: — Me!

RAYMOND Won't you let me kiss you.....Mother! (He falls on his knees by her side)

JACQUE: Ah, Raymond, my son, my boy!

(She takes his head in her hands and kisses him)

RAYMOND Mother! My dear Mother!

JACQUE Oh, I cannot stand it - I am too happy - I have not the strength - (she falls back)

RAYMOND Are you in pain?

JACQUE No, no, dear - don't go - don't move - Then you know all?

RAYMOND Yes - Father is waiting - won't you let me bring him, mother?

JACQUE: Oh yes! Tell him to come, quickly.

RAYMOND Mother, dear, I love you!

(He rises and goes out L.U.E.)

JACQUE: (half rises from her chair) Oh! Oh! I - (calls) Raymond! (She tries to get up but has not strength enough she drops back into her chair) Good-bye, ~~my wee laddie -~~ good-bye dear - it was too - too -

(She dies)

(RAYMOND ENTERS followed by FLORIOT - they come down, R AYMOND L and FLORIOT L.C. NOEL comes down to front bench, DR CHENNEL crosses to R of Jacqueline)

RAYMOND (to FLORIOT) Father!

FLORIOT Jacqueline!

DR C: (stopping him - sees that JACQUE is dead, says) Hush!

FLORIOT Too late. Too late.

(Turns up C. buries his face)

RAYMOND Mother! Mother!

(Throws himself at her knees)

(NOEL sits on first bench)

C U R T A I N